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(54) Titre : KIT CONVENIENCE FOOD COMPRENANT DES FRUITS, DES LEGUMES OU DES HERBS, ET SOUPE OU CONCENRE DE SAUCE EMBALLE SEPAREMENT

(54) Title: CONVENIENCE FOOD KIT COMPRISING FRUIT, VEGETABLES OR HERBS, AND A SEPARATELY PACKAGED SOUP OR SAUCE CONCENTRATE

(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A convenience foodproduct comprising a substantial amount of fresh fruit or vegetables with a separately packaged soup or sauce concentrate, which fruit/vegetables and the concentrated soup or sauce are offered for sale together.

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(54) Title: CONVENIENCE FOOD KIT COMPRISING FRUIT, VEGETABLES OR HERBS, AND A SEPARATELY PACKAGED SOUP OR SAUCE CONCENTRATE

(57) Abstract: A convenience foodproduct comprising a substantial amount of fresh fruit or vegetables with a separately packaged soup or sauce concentrate, which fruit/vegetables and the concentrated soup or sauce are offered for sale together.

CONVENIENCE FOOD KIT COMPRISING FRUIT, VEGETABLES OR HERBS, AND A SEPARATELY PACKAGED SOUP OR SAUCE CONCENTRATE

Field of the invention

The present invention relates to a convenience foodproduct comprising a substantial amount of fresh fruit or vegetables with a separately packaged soup or sauce concentrate, which fruit/vegetables and the concentrated soup or sauce are offered for sale together.

Background of the invention

It is common knowledge that for a healthy diet vegetables and fruit should make up an important component of the daily food intake. Preferably such food or vegetables should be fresh for maximum nutritional benefit (as opposite to canned, deep frozen or dried fruits and vegetables). It is known that nutritionists prescribe that we should consume more fruit and vegetables than we are used to, and for many consumers such amounts of fruit or vegetables on their own appear a large heap, which is unattractive.

It is also widely known that modern consumers demand food products which have both a high quality image and have a high degree of convenience. The convenience preferably should be in any or all of purchase, transport, storage, preparation and consumption. For foodstuffs to exhibit a high quality image it is preferred that they contain at least in part fresh ingredients, and/or that it provides at lot of essential nutrients and/or that the appearance (flavour, colour, etcetera) is good, and/or that little to no preservatives are used having a chemical image. Fresh ingredients are usually ingredients which have a shelf life of 1 day to 20 days, when kept under chilled conditions. Foodstuffs which are not completely ready-made (which only require heating e.g. in microwave ovens) but do require some simple form of preparation also contribute to a high quality, home-made image and is important.

Hence, there is a need for providing fresh fruit and/or vegetables which can be consumed in an attractive way, and which fruit and/or vegetables are easy to prepare. Convenience foods usually contain 2 or more ingredients and require some degree of preparation and are e.g. offered as so-called meal kits.

As the modern consumer is not only demanding high-quality foods or meal kits with a high degree of convenience, such foods or meal kits should preferably also have packaging that takes into account the environment. Hence, a reduced amount of packaging and/or less environmental-unfriendly packaging is desired. Furthermore, many consumers have a

demand for (semi-)prepared foods to contain information as to suggestion of use, nutritional information, instructions to prepare, etcetera. Also, this should preferably be available in a simple manner.

GB 2340471 describes a two-component food product wherein both components are packaged such that the components are out of contact with one another. One of the components is fresh fruit, the other component exemplified is a dairy compound, e.g. a yogurt.

US 5807597 discloses a packaged omelet mix, comprising a mixing beaker which contains a container with aseptically packaged liquid egg and a container with omelet inlay (e.g. cheese, vegetables, meat).

UK 2295371 discloses as state of the art a main container for holding a raw food and a separate sachet for holding a sauce.

Summary of the invention

It has now been found that the above objective may be met (at least in part) by an assembly comprising two packed components, wherein said two components are packed such that the components are not in contact with one another, characterised in that the first component is packed in a single container being a pouch or bag and comprises fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, or fresh herbs and wherein the second component is packed in a single container and comprises a soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate.

In the above, "concentrate" is to be understood that such a concentrate needs to be diluted with an aqueous liquid at some stage prior to consumption. The concept of soup concentrate as such which need to be diluted prior to consumption is well known to the consumer. In connection to this, it is preferred that the concentrate is such that the soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate is to be diluted with an amount of an aqueous liquid 1-50 (preferably 1-20) times the volume of the soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate (apart from the fruit, vegetables or herbs of the food kit according to the invention) prior to consumption.

Detailed description of the invention

It was found that the above solution allows both offering a substantial amount of fresh fruit and/vegetables to the consumer, which can be consumed in the form of a soup. Such a soup

rich in vegetables enjoys a good image as a healthy appetite quencher and provider of goodies such as fresh vegetables.

Soup as such is well known, and is known to be convenient to consume. It is also considered healthy if it contains sufficient vegetables. Soup as currently offered is either canned soup, deep frozen soup, chilled stable soup, or concentrated broth. All these types have their disadvantages. Canned soup is usually sterilised, and vegetables in it are consequently overcooked. Deep frozen soup has a reasonable quality image, but requires a frozen supply chain and occupies a large volume. Chilled stable soup can be good, but suffers from a large volume. Concentrated broth has too little vegetables in it to be interesting from a nutritional perspective.

The assembly according to the invention comprises, next to fruit, vegetables, or herbs a second component. This second component can be a concentrated soup, bouillon, or broth. Such a concentrated soup, bouillon, or broth can be fresh, chilled stable, but it may also be an ambient stable product.

As such a soup, bouillon, or broth usually contains a lot of water, which would make it a bulky product to transport store and sell, the soup, bouillon, or broth is part of the assembly in a concentrated form. Preferably the second component is a soup concentrate, bouillon concentrate, or broth concentrate.

Such a concentrate may be turned into a product with desired characteristics by dilution with an aqueous liquid, e.g. water, milk, wine, etcetera. In case of a concentrate of a soup, bouillon, or broth the amount of aqueous liquid that needs to be added may vary form 1-50 (preferably 1-20) times the amount of the concentrated soup, bouillon, or broth to form the soup, bouillon, or broth. Hence, the second component comprises a 1-50 (preferably 1-20) times concentrated soup, bouillon, or broth. This means that to one volume of concentrate (of soup, bouillon, or broth) should be added 1 to 50 (preferably 1-20) times that volume of an aqueous liquid, e.g. water, to yield the soup, bouillon, or broth in a strength suitable (tastewise) for consumption. This involves some, but not much, activity of the consumer, which is often seen as an advantage. This soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate is preferably in a liquid or pasty form (i.e. preferably not powdery, granular or solid block).

Offering the soup, bouillon, or broth in a concentrated version has another advantage next to volume reduction (thus saving transport and storage costs, and making it more attractive to

the consumer) which is that by concentrating one can achieve a water activity which is such low that the concentrate has a good microbial stability. Such microbial stability should be such that it matches at least the (chilled) shelf life of the fruits or vegetables. The degree of concentration may be such that the soup, bouillon, or broth is even ambient stable.

The amount of the second component (i.e. soup, bouillon, or broth concentrate) is suitably 1-500 g, preferably 10-500 g, more preferably 10-250 g. The amount of the first component (i.e. fruit, vegetables, herbs or spices) is suitably 1-500 g, preferably 2-400 g, more preferably 50-400 g. The concentrated soup, bouillon, broth or sauce may comprise 2-20% wt (preferably 4-15% wt) of an edible salt, e.g. sodium or potassium chloride.

In the assembly according to the invention at least part, preferably all, of the fruit, vegetables, herbs or spices of the first component is fresh. Fresh in this connection means that such components have been harvested and are cleaned. Optionally, such components may have been subjected to a preserving operation, such as blanching, radiation, subjecting to gas, antioxidants, preservatives etcetera, as well as a size reducing operation. Packaging may be under a protective atmosphere. The first components are preferably not fully cooked. Usually at least part of the first component is "chilled stable", which means it remains suitable for consumption when kept at a temperature below room temperature, e.g. 0--10°C, preferably 1-6°C. Such chilled conditions may warrant a term for consumption of 1-50 days, e.g. 1-10 days.

A suitable preparation may involve heating (part of) the fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices by cooking, braising, frying, stir-frying, sautéing, steaming, deep frying etcetera. Prior to, during or after said heating step the concentrated soup, bouillon, broth or sauce may be added. At some stage in the preparation an aqueous liquid is added in an amount such that the final product yields a good tasting soup, bouillon, or broth. Such amount will usually be indicated on the instructions for use.

In the assembly according to the invention, the first component is packed in a single container being a pouch or bag, jar. For such a container packaging materials can be used which are known in the art, such as plastics, laminates, metal foils, glass, metal, etcetera. Preferably, the packaging material is inedible. The second component is preferably packed in a single container. Such single container is preferably a pouch, bag, jar, can, pot, cup, bottle or box. Similar materials may be used. Again, the second component may have been subjected to a preserving process step or agent. In this case, it may include pasteurising or sterilising.

Preferably the concentrated soup, bouillon, or broth is such concentrated that the water activity is below 0.85, more preferably below 0.65, most preferably below 0.45.

Hence, the first component is preferably in one packed entity, and the second component is preferably packed in another entity, but it is preferred (e.g. for convenience) that these two packed products are offered to the consumer and sold together. This can be achieved e.g. by joining the two packed components in one container, e.g. a bag, box, pouch, etcetera. Hence, the invention further relates to a container, e.g. a pouch or bag containing the first component and the pouch, jar, can, bottle containing the second component are packed together in a pouch, bag, box, or joined together by adhesive or connecting means. This objective can also be achieved if the assembly according to the invention in which the packaged second component is contained in the packaged first component. An example of this is: a big pouch containing fresh vegetables and the big pouch furthermore contains a smaller pouch or bottle with a concentrated soup. The instructions for use and other information can be printed on the big pouch. Such an assembly also reduces the amount of packaging material used.

The assemblies according to the invention may further comprise instructions to prepare and/or suggestions for use and/or nutritional information, optionally with graphic representations. Such instructions for use and/or preparation and/or nutritional information may be printed (in part) on the packaging of either the individual components or on the packaging or means that holds the first and second component together.

EXAMPLE

A soup kit is provided by a pouch of an oxygen barrier material, which pouch contains 350g of fresh vegetables (various fresh vegetables, cleaned and if big size reduced) and herbs (mainly sliced sweet carrot and coriander leaves) and a pouch containing 90 g of a concentrated stock comprising e.g. spices and salt. The atmosphere contains approximately 3-5% of oxygen.

On the big pouch instructions for use are printed as well as nutritional information.

The soup kit can be turned into a healthy and tasty carrot and coriander soup by:

- sautéing the vegetables contained in the bigger pouch for about 10 minutes
- adding the concentrated stock contained in the smaller pouch and 700 ml of water
- stirring and simmering the mixture for another 10 minutes.

CLAIMS

1. Assembly comprising two packed components, wherein said two components are packed such that the components are not in contact with one another, characterised in that the first component is packed in a single container being a pouch or bag and comprises fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, or fresh herbs and wherein the second component is packed in a single container and comprises a soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate.

2. Assembly according to claim 1, wherein the soup, bouillon, broth or sauce is to be diluted with an amount of an aqueous liquid 1-50 times the volume of the soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate.

3. Assembly according to claim 1-2, wherein the soup-, bouillon-, or broth concentrate is in a liquid or pasty form.

4. Assembly according to claim 1-3, wherein the concentrated soup, bouillon, or broth comprises 2-20% wt (preferably 4-15% wt) of an edible salt.

5. Assembly according to claim 1-4, wherein the amount of the second component is 1-500 g, preferably 10-250 g.

6. Assembly according to claim 1-5, wherein the amount of the first component is 1-500 g, preferably 50-400 g.

7. Assembly according to claim 1-6, wherein, the container containing the first component and the container containing the second component are packed together in a single pouch, bag, box, or joined together by adhesive or connecting means.

8. Assembly according to claim 1-6, wherein the packaged second component is contained in the packaged first component.

9. Assembly according to claim 8, wherein a pouch, bag or box comprising the fruit, vegetables, or herbs also comprises a pouch or jar or pot comprising the concentrated soup, bouillon, broth or sauce which upon dilution with an aqueous liquid yields a soup, bouillon, broth or sauce.

10. Assembly according to claim 1-9, further comprising instructions to prepare and/or suggestions for use and/or nutritional information.

11. Assembly according to claim 10, wherein the instructions to prepare and/or suggestions for use and/or nutritional information is printed on or assembled with the packaging holding either the first or the second component.

12. Assembly according to claim 10-11, wherein the instructions to prepare or suggestions to use or nutritional information comprise graphic representations.

13. Assembly according to claim 1-12, wherein the at least part of the product is stable for 1-10 days at chilled conditions (1-10°C, preferably 2-6°C).