FOOD CONTAINER SYSTEM

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(57) ABSTRACT

A container is system is disclosed that includes multiple containers and a lid adapted to permit an interior container to hang from a master container. The interior container contains a fluid food substance and the master container includes a solid food substance.
FIG. 3
Determining the perimeter attributes of an aperture of a master container.

Placing upon said master container rib a substantially planar rim of an interior container.

Sealingly fitting a lid upon said rib.

Placing a brittle food with the master container.
FOOD CONTAINER SYSTEM

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/223,740, filed Jul. 8, 2009, entitled Food Product Container System, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to the field of food storage and more specifically to the field of receptacles comprising sealed fluid containers and edible products.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Current snack packaging containers that provide a food compartment and distinct dip/condiment compartment lack the ability to detach the dip/condiment compartment from the main structure. The separate compartment that hold fluids apart from solid food components are unable to maximize the use of available internal space within the packaging material. Furthermore, present containers do not permit a consumer to effectively resell the opened food product and simultaneous resell from the food compartment and dip/condiment compartment.

SUMMARY

[0004] The present invention is directed to a container system and method for supplying a solid food item and fluid food item within a master container. The present invention is ideal for selling food items with separately packaged condiments as a single unit.

[0005] The container system for preserving food products includes a master container, an interior container, and a lid. The master container includes a sidewall that is self-supporting. The sidewall forms a master aperture in the upper portions thereof. Surrounding the master aperture is an upper rib.

[0006] The interior container includes a sidewall dimensioned to fit within said master aperture and that forms a central cavity. The interior container includes a rim positioned on the interior container sidewall such that none of the cavity extends above the rim. A removable seal covers the central cavity.

[0007] The lid includes a resilient lower lip that protrudes downward. The lip is resilient and includes dimensions suitable to form an interference fit with the master container rib. Furthermore, the height dimensions of the lip are constructed to form a minimum clearance fit between the interior container rim and the lid.

[0008] The method of the present invention relates to supplying solid food items with prepackaged fluid food items. Perimeter attributes of a master container rib and master container aperture are determined. Upon the master container rib a substantially planar rim of an interior container is placed. A lid is sealingly fitted upon the rib.

[0009] These aspects of the invention are not meant to be exclusive. Furthermore, some features may apply to certain versions of the invention, but not others. Other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art when read in conjunction with the following description, and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the container system.
[0011] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the container system.
[0012] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of interior container.
[0013] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the container system.
[0014] FIG. 5 is a view of the method of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] Referring first to FIGS. 1 and 2, a basic embodiment of the container system 100 is shown. The master container 102 operates to receive and contain solid food items (not shown), e.g., chips, vegetables, fruit, etc. The master container 102 a master aperture 118 formed by the sidewall 114 of the master container 102. Beneath the sidewall 114 is the master container bottom 116. The master container sidewall 114 includes a ribbing 112 that extends about the periphery of the master container sidewall 114 near the master container aperture 118. The preferred ribbing 112 includes a single ridge arranged at the uppermost point of the master container sidewall 114; although, any protrusion or attachment structure fulfilling the objectives of the present invention will suffice.

[0016] With further reference to FIG. 3, dimensioned to fit within the master container 102 is an interior container 104. The interior container 104 includes an interior container sidewall 120 with diameter less than that of the master container sidewall diameter 114. The interior container sidewall 120 supports a rim 110 that juts from the interior container sidewall 120. The rim 110 extends from the sidewall 120 at least to the extent necessary to support the interior container upon the master container 102, preferably upon the upper rib 112. The rim 110 should be constructed of material, preferably a plastic, capable of supporting the weight of the interior container 104 and the material within the cavity (not shown) of the interior container. The interior cavity is covered by a seal 122, preferably a sealed affixed by a removable adhesive. The seal may further include a tabbed outcropping 124 that permits a user to remove the seal 122.

[0017] When positioned upon the master container sidewall 114, the interior container hangs thereon. It is further preferred that the interior container 104 include a sidewall 120 having at least a portion thereof includes a diameter that forms a minimum clearance fit with the master container sidewall 114. Such close fitting prevents lateral motion of the interior container 104 within the master container 102. The interior container preferably includes a liquid food item, e.g., condiments, juice, soup, sauce, and the like. A liquid food item includes any food or beverage with fluid attributes, including loose granular spices, e.g., sugar or salt.

[0018] A lid 106 is positionable about the ribbing 112 of the master container sidewall 114, preferably in an interference fit. An interference fit when used in the present disclosure refers to a fit in which a first component fits within an entrance of a second component and the entrance of the second component includes a diameter smaller than that of the diameter of the first component and pressure from the first component deforms the second component to accept the first component in a sealed fashion. A minimum clearance fit is a fit in which a first component only just fits into the entrance of a second.
component without modification of the structure of either the first or second component. The interior of the lid 106 includes a substantially planar surface that matches the preferred upper substantially planar surface dimensions of the interior container.

[0019] Turning now to FIG. 4, the preferred cooperation between the lid 106, master container 102, and interior container 104 is illustrated. The interior container 104 includes a substantially planar upper surface that preferably forms a fit with the substantially planar lower surface of the lid 106 that prevents substantial longitudinal motion of the interior container. The cavity 126 preferably hangs in its entirety below the rim 110 of the interior container 104. It is preferred that at least a minimum clearance fit is formed between the upper portions of the interior container 104 and the lower portions of the lid 106. The lid 106 includes a lip 108 that hangs downwardly from the lid 106. The lip forms an interference fit with the ribbing 112 of the master container sidewall 114, and preferably includes dimensions that, in the absence of a minimum clearance fit, and sufficient to prevent substantial lateral motion of the interior container 104. Substantial lateral motion is motion sufficient to release portions of the rim 110 from portions of the master container sidewall 114. It is preferred that any solid food 900, positioned within the master container 102 include a height sufficient to have a proximity to the interior container that prevents substantial longitudinal motion of the solid food 900 within the master container 102. In other words, the interior container 104 may act as a ceiling of the master container 102. Substantial longitudinal motion in relation to the solid food is motion capable of disfiguring at least 25% of the food contents within the master container. Substantial motion of solid food contents will vary by solid food, e.g., chips may toleration less longitudinal motion than apple slices.

[0020] Although the present invention has been described in considerable detail with reference to certain preferred versions thereof, other versions would be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. Therefore, the spirit and scope of the appended claims should not be limited to the description of the preferred versions contained herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A container system for preserving food products, said system comprising:

   - a master container with a self-supporting sidewall that forms a master aperture and an upper rib, proximate to and spanning said master aperture, protruding from said sidewall;
   - an interior container having an interior container sidewall dimensioned to fit within said master aperture and forming an interior container cavity, a substantially-planar, self-supporting upper rim protruding therefrom adapted to rest upon said rib such that said cavity is wholly submerged within said master container sidewall, and a removable seal covering said cavity; and
   - a lid having a resilient lower lip, dimensioned to form an interference fit with said upper rib, protruding downwardly a distance sufficient to form a minimum clearance fit between said rim and said lid.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said interior container sidewall forms a minimum clearance fit with said master container sidewall.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein said interior container further comprises an adhesive seal covering said cavity.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein said adhesive seal includes a compressible protruding tab.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein said master container includes a food item.

6. The system of claim 5 wherein said interior container includes a fluid food item.

7. A container system for preserving food products, said system comprising:

   - a master container with a bottom that supports a brittle food item and a sidewall that forms a master aperture and an upper rib, proximate to and spanning said master aperture, protruding from said sidewall;
   - an interior container having an interior container bottom and an interior container sidewall dimensioned to fit within said master aperture and forming an interior container cavity with a fluid food item, a substantially planar upper rim protruding therefrom, and a removable seal covering said cavity; and
   - a lid having a resilient lower lip, dimensioned to form an interference fit with said upper rib, protruding downwardly a distance sufficient to form a minimum clearance fit between said rim and said lid.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein said bottom of said interior container and said brittle food item form a minimum clearance fit within said master container.

9. The system of claim 7 wherein said interior container sidewall forms a minimum clearance fit with said master container sidewall.

10. The system of claim 7 wherein said interior container further comprises an adhesive seal covering said cavity.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein said adhesive seal includes a compressible protruding tab.

12. The system of claim 7 wherein said master container includes a food item.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein said interior container includes a fluid food item.

14. A method for supplying a fluid food item within a solid food item container, said method comprising:

   - determining the perimeter attributes of an aperture of a master container and an upper rib, proximate to and spanning said master aperture, of said master container, said master container with a sidewall and a bottom that supports a brittle food item.
   - placing upon said master container rib a substantially planar rim of an interior container having an interior container sidewall dimensioned to fit within said master aperture and forming an interior container cavity, wherein said cavity is wholly submerged within said master container sidewall, and a removable seal covering said cavity; and
   - sealingly fitting a lid upon said rib, said lid having a resilient lower lip protruding downwardly a distance sufficient to form a minimum clearance fit between said rim and said lid.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising placing a brittle food item between said bottom and interior container to form a minimum clearance fit.

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