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### DECORATIVE HOLDER FOR FOODSTUFF TRAYS, TINS, AND PANS

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#### Abstract

A decorative holder for foodstuff trays, tins, and pans is provided. The decorative holder includes a receptacle having a bottom wall and a pair of opposing side walls and a pair of opposing end walls extending upwardly from an outer periphery of the bottom wall and terminating in a top edge. Each end wall may have a handle recess formed therein and configured to allow a user to grasp the decorative holder. The decorative holder further includes a lid that is hingedly coupled to the top edge of the receptacle, such as by a plurality of living hinge clips, and configured to pivot between an opened position and a closed position, the lid defining a central opening providing access to an interior region of the decorative holder when disposed atop the receptacle. The receptacle and the lid are configured to hold and generally encapsulate a foodstuff tray, tin, or pan.

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## **Background/Summary**

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION [0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/390,622, filed Dec. 20, 2023, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/104,920, filed Nov. 25, 2020, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

### **FIELD**

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to the field of baking and serving containers. More specifically, the present disclosure relates to decorative and protective holders for cookware and foodstuff trays.

### **BACKGROUND**

[0003] U.S. Patent Publication No. 2016/0249768 discloses a decorative holder for serving/catering trays and tins that includes a bottom holder/receptacle which receives a traditional foil serving tin, effectively surrounding the bottom and four sides of the serving tin. A lid is placed over the upper peripheral edges of the holder/receptacle to hold the serving tin in place and also to cover the upper edges of the serving or catering tin. An optional spacer block may be utilized between the bottom of the holder/receptacle and the serving tin so as to align the upper edges of each.

[0004] The above patent publication is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

### **SUMMARY**

[0005] This Summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts that are further described herein below in the Detailed Description. This Summary is not intended to identify key or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used as an aid in limiting the scope of the claimed subject matter.

[0006] According to one implementation of the present disclosure, a decorative holder for foodstuff trays, tins, and pans is provided. The decorative holder includes a receptacle having a partially corrugated bottom wall, a pair of opposing side walls, and a pair of opposing end walls. The side walls and the end walls extend upwardly from an outer periphery of the partially corrugated bottom wall and terminate in a top edge. The decorative holder further includes a lid that is hingably coupled to the top edge of the receptacle and configured to pivot between an opened position and a closed position, the lid defining a central opening providing access to an interior region of the decorative holder when disposed atop the receptacle. The receptacle and the lid are configured to hold and generally encapsulate a foodstuff tray, tin, or pan therebetween.

[0007] According to another implementation of the present disclosure, a decorative holder for foodstuff trays, tins, and pans is provided. The decorative holder includes a receptacle having a bottom wall, a pair of opposing side walls, and a pair of opposing end walls. The side walls and the end walls extend upwardly from an outer periphery of the bottom wall and terminate in a top edge. The decorative holder further includes a lid that is hingably coupled to the top edge of the receptacle and configured to pivot between an opened position and a closed position, the lid defining a central opening providing access to an interior region of the decorative holder when disposed atop the receptacle. The receptacle and the lid are configured to hold and generally

encapsulate a foodstuff tray, tin, or pan therebetween. The receptacle further comprises a pair of handle recesses formed therein, the pair of handle recesses extending into the interior region of the decorative holder.

[0008] According to yet another implementation of the present disclosure, a decorative holder for foodstuff trays, tins, and pans is provided. The decorative holder includes a receptacle having a bottom wall, a pair of opposing side walls, and a pair of opposing end walls. The side walls and the end walls extend upwardly from an outer periphery of the bottom wall and terminate in a top edge. The decorative holder further includes a lid that is hingably coupled to the top edge of the receptacle using multiple living hinge clips. The lid is configured to pivot between an opened position and a closed position and the lid defines a central opening providing access to an interior region of the decorative holder when disposed atop the receptacle. The receptacle and the lid are configured to hold and generally encapsulate one or more foodstuff trays, tins, or pans therebetween. One of the pair of opposing side walls further comprises multiple hinge clip recesses that extend into the interior region of the decorative holder and are configured to couple to the living hinge clips such that the living hinge clips fit over at least a portion of the top edge.

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## Description

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The present disclosure is described with reference to the following Figures. The same numbers are used throughout the Figures to reference like features and like components.

[0010] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a decorative holder assembly in a closed position.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a perspective of the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1 in an opened position.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a front cross-sectional view of the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1 in the closed position.

[0013] FIG. 4 is a front cross-sectional view of the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1 in the closed position in an alternative configuration.

[0014] FIG. 5 is a side cross-sectional view of the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1 in the closed position.

[0015] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a receptacle utilized in the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1.

[0016] FIG. 7 is another perspective view of the receptacle of FIG. 6.

[0017] FIG. 8 is a top view of the receptacle of FIG. 6.

[0018] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a lid utilized in the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1.

[0019] FIG. 10 is a bottom view of the lid of FIG. 9.

[0020] FIG. 11 is a side cross-sectional view of the hinged coupling between the lid and the receptacle taken along the line 11-11 of FIG. 3.

[0021] FIG. 12 is a side cross-sectional view of the hinged coupling between the lid and the receptacle taken along the line 12-12 of FIG. 3.

[0022] FIG. 13 is a top view of a cover utilized in the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1.

[0023] FIG. 14 is a front view of the cover of FIG. 13.

[0024] FIG. 15 is a side view of the cover of FIG. 13.

[0025] FIG. 16 is a perspective view of multiple decorative holder assemblies in a stacked configuration.

[0026] FIG. 17 is a perspective view of a decorative holder assembly in an alternative foodstuff configuration featuring a foodstuff tray.

[0027] FIG. 18 is a perspective view of the foodstuff tray of FIG. 17.

[0028] FIG. 19 is a perspective view of another receptacle that may be utilized in the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1.

[0029] FIG. 20 is another perspective view of the receptacle of FIG. 19.

[0030] FIG. 21 is a detail view of an internal clip retention feature included in the receptacle of FIG. 19.

[0031] FIG. 22 is a detail view of an external clip retention included in the receptacle of FIG. 19.

[0032] FIG. 23 is a detail view of an alternate clip that may be utilized in the lid of FIG. 9.

[0033] FIG. 24 is a detail view depicting the hinged coupling of the receptacle of FIG. 19 and the clip of FIG. 23.

[0034] FIG. 25 is a perspective view of another cover that may be utilized in the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1.

[0035] FIG. 26 is a perspective view of another lid that may be utilized with the cover of FIG. 25.

[0036] FIG. 27 is a side cross-sectional view depicting the coupling of the cover of FIG. 25 and the lid of FIG. 25.

[0037] FIG. 28 is a perspective view of another cover and lid assembly that may be utilized in the decorative holder assembly of FIG. 1.

[0038] FIG. 29 is a side cross-sectional view depicting the cover of FIG. 28.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0039] In the present description, certain terms have been used for brevity, clearness and understanding. No unnecessary limitations are to be inferred therefrom beyond the requirement of the prior art because such terms are used for descriptive purposes only and are intended to be broadly construed.

[0040] FIGS. 1 and 2 depict perspective views of a decorative holder assembly 10 in accordance with an exemplary preferred implementation of the present disclosure. In general, the decorative holder assembly 10 includes a receptacle 12 and a lid assembly 14 that is detachably coupled to the receptacle 12. The lid assembly 14 includes a lid 16 and a cover 18. In an exemplary implementation, the cover 18 is detachably coupled to the lid 16 using a snap fit assembly process. As desired, the cover 18 can be coupled and decoupled from the lid 16 to block or permit access to a central opening 54 formed between the receptacle 12 and the lid assembly 14.

[0041] The receptacle 12 is shown to include a pair of opposing side walls 22 and a pair of opposing end walls 24. Each of the side walls 22 and end walls 24 extends upwardly from a bottom wall 60 of the receptacle 12. Further details of the features of the bottom wall 60 are included below with reference to FIGS. 3, 4, and 6-8. In an exemplary implementation, a length 62 of the side walls 22 exceeds a length 64 of the end walls 24 such that the receptacle 12 has a generally rectangular shape. In other implementations, the lengths 62, 64 of the side walls 22 and end walls 24 may be identical such that the receptacle 12 has a square shape.

[0042] The lid assembly 14 is hingably coupled to the receptacle 12 such that the lid assembly 14 is pivotable between a closed position (depicted in FIG. 1) and an opened position (depicted in FIG. 2). Further details regarding the hinge features of the lid 16 and the coupling of the lid assembly 14 and the receptacle 12 are included below with reference to FIGS. 11 and 12. To pivot the lid assembly 14 from the closed position to the opened position, a user may grip a latch extension portion 28 incorporated into the lid 16, unseating one or more latch protrusions 30 formed on the underside of the latch extension portion 28 from a mated position within one or more latch recesses 32 formed in one of the side walls 22 of the receptacle 12. Once the latch protrusions 30 have been unseated from the latch recesses 32, the user may rotate the lid assembly 14 upwardly, exposing the central opening 54. In some implementations, the latch extension portion 28 may be branded with a logo or other decorative features.

[0043] A pan 20 is shown to be encapsulated between the receptacle 12 and the lid assembly 14 within the central opening 54. In an exemplary implementation, the pan 20 is a disposable foil pan used for cooking, transporting, and serving a foodstuff. Although cost-effective and convenient, the present inventors have recognized that disposable foil pans are flimsy and susceptible to damage during transport. In addition, foil pans are unattractive and may cause a food served from a foil pan

to be less appetizing than a food served from a more attractive vessel. Accordingly, the present inventors have provided a sturdy and attractive decorative holder assembly that remedies these problems as well as additional problems described below.

[0044] As shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, pan 20 is shown to include a bottom wall 36, with a pair of opposing pan side walls 38 and a pair of opposing pan end walls 40 extending upwardly therefrom. The pan side walls and end walls 38, 40 may terminate in a continuous outwardly extending lip 42. The dimensions of the pan 20 may generally conform to a 9 inch wide by 13 inch long cooking pan standard, with a pan height 44 extending from the bottom wall 36 to the lip 42 of approximately 1.5 to 2.5 inches. In other implementations, a differently sized pan 20 may be utilized (e.g., an 8 inch by 8 inch pan, a 9 inch by 9 inch pan).

[0045] In still further implementations, a rigid non-disposable foodstuff pan 20 may be utilized instead of a disposable foil pan. In still further implementations, a foodstuff tray (e.g., foodstuff tray 302, depicted in FIG. 18) may be encapsulated between the receptacle 12 and the lid assembly 14. An example of the decorative holder assembly 10 in a food tray configuration is described below with reference to FIG. 17.

[0046] Still referring to FIGS. 1-4, the receptacle 12 is further shown to include a handle recess 26 formed in each of the receptacle end walls 24. Advantageously, the handle recesses 26 permit a user to insert their fingers within the recesses 26 on the decorative holder assembly 10 for transport purposes. As best shown in the front cross-sectional views of FIGS. 3 and 4, the handle recesses 26 extend inwardly into the central opening 54, thus providing the receptacle 12 with an attractive and sleek appearance not achievable through outwardly extending handles. Each handle recess 26 is defined by an upwardly extending and outwardly sloping handle wall portion 66 as well as a grip wall portion 68 that slopes downwardly from the handle wall portion 66 and terminates in an outer lip 70. In various implementations, the dimensions of the wall portions 66, 68 and the outer lip 70 may vary to form larger or smaller recesses 26, or the recesses 26 may be formed in a different location on the receptacle 12 (e.g., the side walls 22). In an exemplary implementation, the handle wall portion 66 slopes outwardly from the bottom wall 60 and generally matches the profile of the end walls 40 of the pan 20 such that the pan 20 rests against the handle wall portions 66 (depicted in FIG. 3). By matching the profile of the handle wall portion 66 to the end walls 40, lateral movement of the pan 20 relative to the receptacle 12 is prevented and a risk of spillage of food contained within the pan 20 during transport of the decorative holder assembly 10 is minimized.

[0047] In operation, a user may position their hands such that one or more of their fingertips rest against the grip wall portion 68 and the outer lip 70, thus providing a secure and non-slip hold on the receptacle 12. In some implementations, certain regions of the handle recesses 26 may be textured to improve the user's grip. As best depicted in FIG. 5 (which omits the pan 20), each handle recess 26 is bound by inwardly sloping handle end wall portions 72. The end wall portions 72 may be inclined, that is, non-orthogonal to the bottom wall 60 of the receptacle 12. By utilizing non-orthogonal orientations for the handle wall and end wall portions 66, 72, easier fabrication of the receptacle 12 is achieved. In some implementations, the handle recesses 26 are not bound by the end wall portions 72, and the recesses 26 may extend the entire length 64 (see FIG. 2) of the end walls 24.

[0048] In an exemplary implementation, both the receptacle 12 and the lid 16 are fabricated from polypropylene, while the cover 18 is fabricated from transparent styrene-acrylonitrile resin (SAN). In other implementations, each of the receptacle 12, lid 16, and cover 18 may be fabricated from polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polycarbonate (PC), clarified polypropylene (PP), Plexiglass, Tritan, Kostrate Edge, EdgeGlass, or an alloy blend of various polymer materials. The material may be selected based on the intended use of the decorative holder assembly 10. For example, PC or Tritan may be selected for their low temperature resiliency and crack resistance if the decorative holder assembly 10 is expected to be subjected to freezing temperatures or high drop impacts. Each of the receptacle 12, lid 16, and cover 18 may be

fabricated using an injection molding process. The present inventors have recognized that injection molding results in a high quality detailed part at a low cost per part. In other implementations, a different fabrication process may be utilized, including, but not limited to, vacuum forming, blow molding, and rapid production.

[0049] Referring now specifically to FIG. 4, an additional configuration of the decorative holder assembly **10** is shown to include a cooling pack component **56** disposed between the bottom wall **60** of the receptacle **12** and the bottom wall **36** of the pan **20**. The cooling pack component **56** may be any suitable type of rigid or flexible ice or gel cooling pack that acts to cool the bottom wall **36** of the pan **20** and keep the food contained therein at an optimal temperature for food safety and palatability. In some implementations, due to the shape or flexibility of the cooling pack component **56**, portions of the cooling pack component **56** may extend upwardly along one or both of the receptacle side walls and end walls **22**, **24** to cool one or both of the pan side walls and end walls **38**, **40**. A height **58** of the cooling pack component **56** may be controlled in conjunction with the pan height **44** to ensure that adequate clearance is maintained between the outwardly extending lip **42** of the pan **20** and the lid assembly **14**. In some implementations, a heating pack component may be utilized in place of the cooling pack component **56**, again with the goal of maintaining the food contained in the pan **20** within an optimal temperature range.

[0050] As best depicted in the side cross-sectional view of FIG. 5, the cover **18** of the lid assembly **14** is shown to include a generally planar central wall **46** having a surface area that generally corresponds to the surface area of the central opening **54** defined by the lid **16**. The central wall **46** is surrounded by a downwardly sloping peripheral wall **48**, an upwardly sloping peripheral wall **50**, and a horizontal lip **52**. The upwardly sloping peripheral wall **50** and the horizontal lip **52** are shown to rest against an outer surface **74** of the lid **16**. The outer surface **74** of the lid **16** is generally semi-circular and extends from an inner peripheral edge **76** to an outer peripheral edge **78**. When the lid assembly **14** is coupled to the receptacle **12**, the inner peripheral edge **76** resides within the central opening **54**, and the outer peripheral edge **78** is positioned over exterior surfaces of the side walls **22** and end walls **24** of the receptacle **12** and vertically below a peripheral top edge **80** of the receptacle **12**.

[0051] The features of the receptacle **12** are further depicted in FIGS. 6-8. Specifically, FIGS. 6 and 7 respectively depict front and rear perspective views of the receptacle **12**, while FIG. 8 depicts a top view of the receptacle **12**. As noted above, the receptacle **12** includes a pair of opposing side walls **22** and a pair of opposing end walls **24**. Each of the side walls **22** and end walls **24** extends upwardly from a periphery of the bottom wall **60**, terminating in the top receptacle edge **80**. Notably, the side walls **22** and end walls **24** terminate in the top receptacle edge **80** without the inclusion of any horizontally-extending lip, thus providing the receptacle **12** with a sleek, attractive appearance that permits easy coupling of receptacle **12** to the lid assembly **14**.

[0052] As noted above, one of the side walls **22** is shown to include multiple latch recesses **32** that are sized and shaped to receive the latch protrusions **30** extending from the latch extension portion **28** of the lid **16** (also depicted in FIG. 10, described below). Mating of the latch protrusions **30** to the latch recesses **32** retains the lid assembly **14** in the closed position. In an exemplary implementation, the latch recesses **32** are positioned just below the top receptacle edge **80**, and below one or more latch indicator recesses **34** positioned coincident with the top receptacle edge **80**. The latch indicator recesses **34** may act as lead-in features that align the latch protrusions **30** for mating with the latch recesses **32**. As the latch protrusions **30** pass over the latch indicator recesses **34**, an audible indicator (e.g., a clicking noise) may be emitted due to the interaction of the latch protrusions **30** and the latch indicator recesses **34**, signaling the achievement of a successful mate to a user.

[0053] Referring now to FIG. 7, the receptacle **12** is shown to include a pair of hinge clip receiving recesses **82** on the sidewall **22** opposing the latch recesses **32** and latch indicator recesses **34**. Each hinge clip receiving recess **82** is sized and shaped to couple to a living hinge clip **84** extending from

the lid **16** (depicted in FIGS. **11** and **12**, described below). In an exemplary implementation, each of the hinge clip receiving recesses **82** further includes a clip indicator recess or notch **86**. Similar to the latch indicator recess **34**, the clip indicator recess **86** may aid in locating the living hinge clip **84** relative to the hinge clip receiving recess **82**, as well as provide audible indication of successful mating between the living hinge clip **84** and the clip receiving recess **82**. Although the present figures depict the decorative holder assembly **10** as having a pair of living hinge clips **84** and corresponding hinge clip receiving recesses **82**, in other implementations, the decorative holder assembly **10** may include a different number of hingable couplings between the hinge clips **84** and clip receiving recesses **82**. For example, if the decorative holder assembly **10** is sized to accommodate a small form factor pan **20**, the lid **16** may include only a single hinge clip **84** with a single clip receiving recess **82** on the receptacle **12**. Conversely, if the decorative holder assembly **10** is sized to accommodate a large form factor pan **20**, the lid **16** may include three or more hinge clips **84** with three or more clip receiving recesses **82** on the receptacle **12**.

[0054] Turning now to FIG. **8**, a top view of the receptacle **12** is depicted. As shown, the bottom wall **60** includes multiple protrusions **88** that result in the bottom wall **60** being generally corrugated or otherwise non-planar. The present inventors have recognized that providing the bottom wall **60** with a corrugated or wave-like surface increases the amount of air permitted to flow underneath the bottom wall **60** when the decorative holder assembly **10** rests on a surface.

Advantageously, increasing the amount of airflow underneath the bottom wall **60** insulates and aids in cooling of the foodstuff within the pan **20**, particularly when the pan **20** is positioned atop an ice pack **56**, as depicted in FIG. **4**. The corrugated surface has a pattern of high portions and low portions, and in the depicted example is a wave-like pattern that has channels extending a cross-sectional length or width of the pan **20** or tray in the receptacle **12**, thereby allowing air to flow and circulate around and under the pan **20** or tray within the receptacle **12**. The pattern of high and low portions also minimizes the surface area of the bottom wall **60** in contact with the pan **20** or the cooling pack component **56**, as well as the surface area of the bottom wall **60** in contact with a tabletop or other surface on which the decorative holder assembly **10** may be disposed. This minimization of surface area reduces the heat transfer between the pan **20** and the bottom wall **60**, and the bottom wall **60** and the tabletop. In this way, the risk of polymer softening and deformation of the bottom wall **60** due to heat transfer from the pan **20** is minimized. Similarly, the risk of cracking of the bottom wall **60** due to cooling from the cooling pack component **56** is minimized. In some implementations, the corrugated pattern of the bottom wall **60** may be interrupted by one or more flat surfaces (e.g., circular flat surfaces) that aid in the injection molding process. For example, the flat surfaces may correspond to injection molding gate locations, or lift attachment points that permit the receptacle **12** to be lifted out of an injection mold cavity using air poppet valves. In an exemplary embodiment, the receptacle **12** is further shown to include tray locating recesses **108** formed in each of the corners of the bottom wall **60**. The tray locating recesses **108** may be configured to mate with features of a foodstuff tray (e.g., foodstuff tray **302**, depicted in FIGS. **17** and **18**).

[0055] Referring now to FIGS. **9** and **10**, perspective and bottom views of the lid **16** are shown. As described above, the lid generally consists of an outer surface **74** that extends from an inner peripheral edge **76** to an outer peripheral edge **78**. The outer peripheral edge **78** is configured to fit over the top edge **80** of the receptacle **12**. As specifically depicted in FIG. **10**, latch protrusions **30** located on a latch extension portion **28** are positioned opposite the pair of living hinge clips **84**. An inner surface **90** of the lid **16** is also shown to include an inner lip **92** extending at least partially around the inner surface **90** between the inner peripheral edge **76** and the outer peripheral edge **78**. When the lid assembly **14** is coupled to the receptacle **12** and pivoted to the closed position, the inner lip **92** may reside just inside the top edge **80** of the receptacle **12**, such that the outer peripheral edge **78** and the inner lip **92** form a clip-like mate over the top edge **80** (see FIGS. **3** and **4**) of the receptacle **12**, thereby minimizing any potential movement of the lid assembly **14** relative

to the receptacle **12**. As depicted specifically in FIG. **4**, in some implementations, the inner lip **92** is positioned outwardly of the pan lip **42**. In other implementations, the inner lip **92** may instead be positioned closer to the inner peripheral edge **76** such that the inner lip **92** is positioned inwardly of the pan lip **42** and acts to retain the pan **20**.

[0056] Referring now to FIGS. **11** and **12**, side cross-sectional views of coupling of the lid **16** and receptacle **12** are depicted. As shown, the lid **16** includes the living hinge clip **84** extending from the outer peripheral edge **78**. Advantageously, use of living hinges permits the lid **16** to be fabricated as a single component, thereby simplifying the bill of materials and assembly of the decorative holder assembly **10**.

[0057] A living hinge portion **94** of the clip **84** permits the lid assembly **14** to pivot between the closed position and the opened position. Adjacent the living hinge portion **94**, each clip **84** includes an exterior clip portion **96** and an interior clip portion **98**. Together, the exterior clip portion **96** and the interior clip portion **98** are generally C-shaped to fit over the top edge **80** and into a clip receiving recess **82** formed in the sidewall **22** of the receptacle **12**. As specifically depicted in FIG. **11**, the exterior clip portion **96** includes a locating protrusion **100** that extends from the exterior clip portion **96** and is configured to fit within the clip indicator recess **86** formed within the receptacle **12**. Mating of the locating protrusion **100** with the clip indicator recess **86** may result in an audible indicator (e.g., a clicking or snapping sound) of a successful coupling of the lid **16** to the receptacle **12**.

[0058] FIGS. **13-15** respectively depict additional top, front, and side views of the cover **18**. As described above, the cover **18** may include a central wall **46** surrounded by a downwardly sloping peripheral wall **48**, an upwardly sloping peripheral wall **50**, and a horizontal lip **52**. In some implementations, the central wall **46** includes a defined branding area **102** in which a logo may be formed (e.g., as part of an injection molding process) or affixed (e.g., using a decal). In other implementations, all or a substantial portion of the central wall **46** can be painted, printed or otherwise decorated to provide an attractive appearance to the decorative holder assembly **10**.

[0059] Referring specifically to FIG. **13**, the cover **18** is further shown to include stacking protrusions **104** extending inwardly from the upwardly sloping peripheral wall **50**, just below the horizontal lip **52**. The stacking protrusions **104** may be configured to fit with corresponding features (e.g., interlocking protrusions, recesses) located on the exterior surface of the bottom wall **60** of the receptacle **12** in order to limit relative movement of the receptacle **12** and the cover **18**. For example, the cover **18** may be removed from the lid assembly **14** and placed underneath the receptacle **12** in order to provide access to an interior region within the central opening **54** while serving the foodstuff contained within the pan **20**. In addition, as depicted in FIG. **16**, multiple decorative holder assemblies **10** may be stacked atop each other during transport. As shown, in an exemplary implementation the stacking protrusions **104** are generally arc-shaped, although any desired shape compatible with corresponding features of the receptacle **12** may be utilized.

[0060] As best shown in FIGS. **14** and **15**, the cover **18** also includes detent prongs or tabs **106** extending outwardly from the upwardly sloping peripheral wall **50**. The detent prongs **106** are configured to fit beneath the inner peripheral edge **76** of the lid **16** (depicted in FIG. **5**) and act to retain the cover **18** when the cover **18** is coupled to the lid **16** to form the lid assembly **14**. In an exemplary implementation, when assembled in the lid assembly **14**, the cover **18** includes one pair of detent prongs **106** extending toward a sidewall **22** of the receptacle **12** and an opposing pair of detent prongs **106** facing the opposite sidewall **22**. In other implementations, the cover **18** may include a different number of detent prongs **106**, in different locations than those depicted in FIGS. **13-15**.

[0061] FIG. **16** depicts multiple decorative holder assemblies in a stacked configuration **200**, with an upper decorative holder assembly **202** disposed atop a lower decorative holder assembly **204**. Each of the upper and lower decorative holder assemblies **202**, **204** may be identical or substantially similar to the decorative holder assembly **10** depicted and described above with



reference to FIGS. 1-15. The present inventors have recognized that transport of aluminum pans **20** to potlucks, events, or the like often involves the need to transport multiple foodstuff pans **20** at once. Accordingly, the bottom wall **60** of the receptacle **12** on the upper decorative holder assembly **202** is configured to fit with the cover **18** of the lower decorative holder assembly **204** to minimize slip between the assemblies **202**, **204** and prevent spillage of foodstuff contained therein.

[0062] FIG. **17** depicts a decorative holder assembly **300** in a foodstuff tray configuration. Certain components of the decorative holder assembly **300** may be identical or substantially similar to the components of the decorative holder assembly **10**, depicted and described above with reference to FIGS. 1-15. For example, the receptacle **12** and the lid assembly **14** may be identical in both the decorative holder assemblies **10** and **200**. However, in contrast to the decorative holder assembly **10**, the decorative holder assembly **300** may include a foodstuff tray **302** encapsulated between the receptacle **12** and the lid assembly **14**.

[0063] FIG. **18** depicts a perspective view of the foodstuff tray **302**. As shown, the foodstuff tray **302** includes a generally planar supporting wall **304** with multiple foodstuff indentations **306** formed therein. The supporting wall **304** may substantially correspond to the size and shape (e.g., generally rectangular, generally square) of the receptacle **12**. The indentations **306** may be formed in a regular pattern in the supporting wall **304** such that food items placed within the indentations **306** are separated from each other and aesthetic damage to the food items is prevented during transport and serving of the food items. Although each of the indentations **306** depicted in FIGS. **17** and **18** is depicted as having an oval shape that is well-suited for supporting eggs and other egg-shaped foods, in other implementations, the indentations **306** may have any other shape required to support a desired food item (e.g., circular shapes suitable for supporting cupcakes). In still further implementations, rather than solid indentations, the supporting wall **304** may be formed with multiple holes of any desired shape suitable to receive and support a desired food item.

[0064] Multiple legs **308** are shown to extend downwardly from the supporting wall **304**. In an exemplary implementation, the foodstuff tray **302** includes four legs **308**, with one leg **308** positioned at each of the corners of the supporting wall **304**. In other implementations, the foodstuff tray **302** may include a greater or fewer number of legs **308**, or legs **308** positioned differently relative to the supporting wall **304**. The height of each of the legs **308** may correspond to the food items intended to be supported by the indentations **306**, as well as the intended purpose of the decorative holder assembly **300**. For example, if the legs **308** are too long, there may be insufficient clearance for the food items when the lid assembly **14** is pivoted to a closed position, as depicted in FIG. **17**. Each of the legs **308** may be generally arc-shaped, corresponding to arc-shaped corner recesses **310** formed in the supporting wall **304**, as well as the tray locating recesses **108** formed in the receptacle **12** (depicted in FIG. **8**). The corner recesses **310** may permit multiple foodstuff trays **302** to be stacked atop each other and encapsulated within the receptacle **12** and lid assembly **14**.

[0065] The supporting wall **304** is further shown to include grab recesses **312** formed therein. In an exemplary implementation, the supporting wall **304** includes a pair of opposing grab recesses **312** facing the side walls **22** of the receptacle **12**, although in other implementations, the grab recesses **312** may face the end walls **24** of the receptacle **12**. The grab recesses **312** may be any shape or size required to permit a user to insert their fingers within the grab recesses **312** and underneath the supporting **304** without damaging the food items placed within the indentations **306**.

[0066] The foodstuff tray **302** may be fabricated from any material suitable for the food items intended to be supported by the foodstuff tray **302**. In an exemplary implementation, the foodstuff tray **302** is fabricated from the same material as the receptacle **12** and the lid **16** (e.g., polypropylene).

[0067] Referring now to FIGS. **19** and **20**, perspective views of an alternate receptacle **400** are depicted. Many of the features of the receptacle **400** are identical or substantially similar to the receptacle **12**, depicted and described above with reference to FIGS. 1-8. For example, the

receptacle **400** is shown to include a pair of opposing side walls **422** and a pair of opposing end walls **424**. Each of the side walls **422** and the end walls **424** extends upwardly from a periphery of a corrugated bottom wall **460**, terminating in a top receptacle edge **480**. One of the sidewalls **422** is shown to include multiple latch recesses **432** that are situated below latch indicator recesses **434**. On the side wall **422** opposite the recesses **432**, **444**, the receptacle **400** is shown to include a pair of internal clip indexing features **482**. Referring specifically to FIG. **20**, the side wall **422** opposite the recesses **432**, **444** is further shown to include a pair of external detent ribs **486**.

[0068] The clip indexing features **482** and the external detent ribs **486** are positioned on the receptacle **400** to correspond to the positions of living hinge clips (e.g., living hinge clips **84**) on the lid (e.g., lid **16**). As shown in FIG. **21**, each of the clip indexing features **482** is generally U-shaped and extends from the side wall **422**. The clip indexing features **482** may be utilized as a visual signal for the user to aid in locating the living hinge clips relative to the receptacle **400**. In an exemplary implementation, the distance that the clip indexing feature **482** extends from the side wall **422** is tapered such that the clip indexing feature **482** is thickest near the top receptacle edge **480**.

[0069] As best shown in FIG. **22**, each of the pair of external detent ribs **486** may include multiple rib components **488**. In an exemplary implementation, each of the pair of external detent ribs **486** includes three vertical rib components **488**, although in other implementations, a different number of rib components **488** may be utilized. Each of the rib components **488** is shown to be substantially arc-shaped in order to avoid sharp edges on the exterior of the receptacle **400**. In some implementations, the vertical rib components **488** may be connected to each other by a horizontal rib (not shown) in order to minimize the risk of fracture of the rib components **488**.

[0070] FIG. **23** depicts a perspective view of an alternate living hinge clip **584** that may be incorporated on a lid (e.g., lid **16**). A living hinge portion **594** of the clip **584** permits a lid assembly (e.g., lid assembly **14**) to pivot between the closed position and the opened position. Adjacent the living hinge portion **594**, each clip **584** includes an exterior clip portion **596** and an interior clip portion **598**. As shown in FIG. **24**, the exterior clip portion **596** and the interior clip portion **598** are generally C-shaped, and a gap in the exterior clip portion **596** permits the clip **584** to be located around the detent rib components **488**. The rib components **488** create an audible signal (e.g., a snapping sound) that the clip **584** has been successfully located on the receptacle. In addition, the rib components **488** act to retain the clip **584** on the receptacle.

[0071] Referring now to FIG. **25**, an alternate cover **600** is depicted according to an exemplary implementation. Similar to the cover **18** (depicted in FIGS. **13-15**), the alternate cover **600** includes a central wall **646**. However, unlike the cover **18**, the central wall **646** is surrounded only by an upwardly sloping peripheral wall **650**, rather than both downwardly sloping and upwardly sloping walls. The upwardly sloping peripheral wall **650** is shown to terminate in a horizontal lip **652**, and stacking recesses **654** are formed in each of the corners of the upwardly sloping peripheral wall **656**. In addition, a stacking ridge **656** extends upwardly from the central wall **646**. In an exemplary implementation, the stacking ridge **656** has a generally rectangular-shaped perimeter, and together, the stacking recesses **654** and the stacking ridge **656** interact with corresponding features (e.g., interlocking protrusions, recesses) located on an exterior surface of a bottom wall (e.g., bottom wall **60**) of a receptacle (e.g., receptacle **12**, receptacle **400**) to limit relative movement of the cover **600** and a receptacle stacked atop the cover **600**.

[0072] Still referring to FIG. **25**, the cover **600** is further shown to include generally arc-shaped retaining protrusions **658** extending outwardly from the peripheral wall **650** opposite the stacking recesses **654**. FIG. **26** depicts an alternate lid **700** that is configured to be mated to the cover **600** using the retaining protrusions **658**. As shown, the lid **700** generally consists of an outer surface **774** that extends from an inner peripheral edge **776** to an outer peripheral edge **778**. An arc-shaped cover receiving tab **780** is formed in each of the corners of the outer surface **774**, and as shown in the cross-sectional view of FIG. **27**, the retaining protrusions **658** are configured to fit within

recesses in the corner receiving tabs **780** to retain the cover **600** when the cover **600** is coupled to the lid **700**.

[0073] FIGS. **28** and **29** depict perspective and side cross-sectional views of another alternate cover **800**. As depicted in FIG. **28**, the cover **800** may be coupled to the lid **16** (depicted in FIGS. **9-10**). The cover **800** is shown to include a central wall **802** surrounded by an upwardly sloping peripheral wall **804**. Corner walls **806** extend downwardly from the peripheral wall **804** and over a portion of the outer surface **74** of the lid **16**. A generally arc-shaped retaining protrusion **808** (best depicted in FIG. **29**) extends inwardly from each of the corner walls **806**. As opposed to fitting within a recess formed in the lid **16**, the retaining protrusions **808** fit underneath the outer peripheral edge **78** of the lid **16** to retain the cover **800** when the cover **800** is coupled to the lid **16**.

[0074] In the present disclosure, certain terms have been used for brevity, clearness and understanding. No unnecessary limitations are to be implied therefrom beyond the requirement of the prior art because such terms are used for descriptive purposes only and are intended to be broadly construed. The different systems and methods described herein may be used alone or in combination with other systems and devices. Various equivalents, alternatives and modifications are possible within the scope of the appended claims.

## Claims

1. A decorative holder for foodstuff trays, tins, and pans, comprising: a receptacle having a bottom wall, a pair of opposing side walls, and a pair of opposing end walls, wherein the side walls and the end walls extend upwardly from an outer periphery of the bottom wall and terminate in a top edge; and a lid that is hingedly coupled to the top edge of the receptacle and configured to pivot between an opened position and a closed position, the lid defining a central opening providing access to an interior region of the decorative holder when disposed atop the receptacle; wherein the receptacle and the lid are configured to hold and generally encapsulate one or more foodstuff trays, tins, or pans therebetween; and wherein the receptacle further comprises a pair of handle recesses formed therein, the pair of handle recesses extending into the interior region of the decorative holder.
2. The decorative holder of claim 1, wherein the lid is hingedly coupled to the top edge of the receptacle using a plurality of living hinge clips and wherein one of the pair of opposing side walls further comprises a plurality of hinge clip recesses that extend into the interior region of the decorative holder and are configured to couple to the plurality of living hinge clips such that the plurality of living hinge clips fit over at least a portion of the top edge.
3. The decorative holder of claim 2, wherein the pair of handle recesses are formed in the pair of opposing end walls.
4. The decorative holder of claim 1, wherein each of the pair of handle recesses is defined by a handle wall portion that extends upwardly from the bottom wall.
5. The decorative holder of claim 4, wherein the handle wall portion that extends upwardly from the bottom wall is not orthogonal to the bottom wall.
6. The decorative holder of claim 5, wherein the handle wall portion slopes outwardly from the bottom wall.
7. The decorative holder of claim 4, wherein each of the pair of handle recesses is further defined by a grip wall portion that extends outwardly from the handle wall portion.
8. The decorative holder of claim 7, wherein the grip wall portion that slopes downwardly from the handle wall portion and terminates in an outer lip.
9. The decorative holder of claim 1, wherein each of the pair of opposing sidewalls is longer than each of the pair of opposing end walls such that the receptacle is rectangular, and wherein each of the pair of handle recesses is on a respective one of the pair of opposing end walls.
10. The decorative holder of claim 1, wherein one of the pair of opposing side walls further comprises at least one latch connection formed below the top edge and configured to receive a latch

protrusion on the lid to retain the lid in the closed position.

**11.** The decorative holder of claim 10, wherein a peripheral edge of the lid further comprises a latch extension portion having the latch protrusion, and wherein at least one latch connection on receptacle is configured to align with the latch protrusion on the latch extension portion of the lid when the lid is in the closed position.

**12.** A decorative holder for foodstuff trays, tins, and pans, comprising: a receptacle having a bottom wall, a pair of opposing side walls, and a pair of opposing end walls, wherein the side walls and the end walls extend upwardly from an outer periphery of the bottom wall and terminate in a top edge; and a lid that is hingedly coupled to the top edge of the receptacle using a plurality of living hinge clips and configured to pivot between an opened position and a closed position, the lid defining a central opening providing access to an interior region of the decorative holder when disposed atop the receptacle; wherein the receptacle and the lid are configured to securely hold and generally encapsulate one or more foodstuff trays, tins, or pans therebetween; and wherein one of the pair of opposing side walls further comprises a plurality of hinge clip recesses that extend into the interior region of the decorative holder and are configured to couple to the plurality of living hinge clips such that the plurality of living hinge clips fit over at least a portion of the top edge.

**13.** The decorative holder of claim 12, wherein the receptacle further comprises a pair of handle recesses formed therein, the pair of handle recesses extending into the interior region of the decorative holder.

**14.** The decorative holder of claim 13, wherein the pair of handle recesses are formed in the pair of opposing end walls.

**15.** The decorative holder of claim 12, further comprising a cover that is detachably coupled to the lid to form a lid assembly, the cover configured to removably attach to the lid to cover the central opening, and wherein the cover is clear and is fabricated from styrene-acrylonitrile.

**16.** The decorative holder of claim 15, wherein the cover is configured to rest atop an upwardly-extending semi-circular outer surface of the lid.

**17.** The decorative holder of claim 12, wherein the lid is configured to pivot between the opened position and the closed position about pivot axes on the plurality of living hinge clips, the pivot axes positioned outside of an outer edge of the one of the pair of opposing side walls comprising the plurality of hinge clip recesses.

**18.** The decorative holder of claim 12, wherein the lid has an semi-circular profile extending upwardly between an inner peripheral edge and an outer peripheral edge, wherein the plurality of living hinge clips includes two living hinge clips connected to and spaced apart along the outer peripheral edge.

**19.** The decorative holder of claim 18, wherein at least a portion of each of the two living hinge clips is situated vertically below and inward from the outer peripheral edge of the lid when the lid is in the closed position.

**20.** The decorative holder of claim 18, wherein the lid further comprises at least one lid recess in the outer peripheral edge configured to accommodate the plurality of living hinge clips when the lid is in the closed position.

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