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**Description**

The invention relates to a disposable package for cooking or heating foodstuffs, comprising a heat resistant container divided into at least an upper and a lower compartment by a steam-permeable partition, at least one upper compartment containing the foodstuffs.

Such disposable packages for foodstuffs, such as frozen food, in which the food can be heated or cooked are known from US-A-2.850.391. The package described in said specification comprises an amount of plain water contained in the lower compartment. After sufficiently heating the ice it melts and is made to boil, whereafter the generated steam will heat and cook the food. Usually however a blandly tasting, watery food results, requiring further processing to render it tasty. It is an object of the invention to provide a package of the general type as described enabling to prepare tastier foodstuff or foodstuff-combinations and that in an easy way.

According to the invention there is provided a disposable package for cooking or heating foodstuffs, comprising a heat resistant container, made of disposable material, and divided into at least an upper and a lower compartment by a steam-permeable partition, at least one upper compartment containing the foodstuffs, of which package according to the invention the lowermost compartment contains an edible substance comprising aroma and/or flavouring components.

Preferably the heat-resistant container is made of aluminum. The steam-permeable partition may be a perforated partition wall. Preferably the partition is made of a heat-resistant material, such as PET, any other heat-resistant plastic or perforated aluminum. If only one partition is used, it is preferably so located within the container that it is substantially horizontal with respect to the top or bottom of the package during normal use.

Foodstuffs suitable for cooking or heating are for example foodstuffs composed of loose units such as beans, peas, asparagus, brussels sprouts, potatoes as well as meat pieces such as chicken, veal, beef, fish and pork. Larger pieces of fish, meat and vegetables can also be cooked or heated. The foodstuffs are preferably frozen, although foodstuffs which are chilled or stored at ambient temperature can also be used. Optionally, the foodstuff can be raw or at least partly cooked or baked. Upon heating the foodstuff may be further cooked to give a fully cooked product suitable for direct consumption.

The edible substance, which comprises aroma and/or flavouring components, produces an aromatised or flavoured steam on heating. This can improve the smell and/or taste of the foodstuff after cooking or heating. The edible substance can, for example, be seasoned water, broth and mixtures of fat and water, such as butter and water. To generate sufficient steam during heating, it is preferred that the edible substance comprises at least 80% by weight of water.

Preferably the foodstuff to be cooked or heated and/or the edible substance is frozen or relatively viscous at storage temperatures to prevent admixture of the edible substance and the foodstuff when stored in the disposable package according to the invention.

Optimum cooking or heating is achieved when the weight ratio of the edible substance to the foodstuff is less than 1 : 3 and is preferably about 1 : 4.

To facilitate removal of the foodstuff from the package after cooking or heating it is preferred that the container is provided with a lid which is easily removed. Suitable lids are for example, plastic lids or removable foils which are attached to the container, such as aluminium foil.

Preferably, the lid of the container is provided with one or more venting holes which, during use, prevent the generation of excess pressure in the container. These venting holes can be made by piercing holes in the lid prior to heating the package. The escape of steam through the venting holes indicates that the cooking or heating process has commenced.

Preferably the edible substance is removed after cooking or heating the foodstuff. The package is therefore, preferably provided with means for opening the lowermost compartment, such as a removable bottom. Most preferably the steam permeable partition is removable. In use, this partition is removed after the removal of the cooked or heated foodstuffs. Thereafter the edible substance can be taken from the lowermost compartment and, if suitable, used as a sauce to accompany the foodstuff. The removable partition may be provided with two strips, standing up from the partition, which can be used as gripping means.

The package according to the invention can be heated in a variety of ways, such as in a gas oven, hot-air oven, or microwave oven. Particularly preferred is heating the package on an open flame, such as on a gas-cooker or on a single-burner gas-cooker commonly referred to as a camping stove. Due to the fact that the steam generated has a temperature of about 100°C, the required cooking or heating time is independent of the heating source from the moment that steam is generated. Due to the high efficiency of contact between the foodstuffs and the steam, a uniformly heated product may be obtained. If it is desired to increase the area of contact between the foodstuff to be cooked or heated and the steam, a partition in the form of zig-zag can be used.

If more than one foodstuff is to be cooked or heated, further steam-permeable partitions may be arranged

in the container.

If two foodstuffs are to be cooked or heated separately, two horizontal steam-permeable partitions are used to form three superimposed compartments within the container. The lowermost compartment contains the edible substance, and the two upper compartments contain the respective foodstuffs.

5 Alternatively it is possible to use one horizontal steam-permeable partition to separate the container into upper and lower compartments and a vertical partition, which may also be steam-permeable. The vertical partition separates the upper compartment into two juxtaposed compartments.

The invention is further illustrated in the following figures in which preferred embodiments of the package according to the invention are shown :

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Figure 1 is a first embodiment of a package according to the invention.  
 Figure 2 is a second embodiment of a package according to the invention.  
 Figure 3 is a third embodiment of a package according to the invention.

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Figure 1 shows a package comprising a heat-resistant container 1, made of aluminium, and a removable aluminium foil lid 2 attached to the container at its rim. Venting holes 3 are arranged in the lid. The container is separated into two compartments by a perforated aluminium partition 4 which has been folded into a zig-zag shape. The container 1 is provided with a shoulder 5 on the inner surface thereof. The partition 4 is supported by this shoulder 5. The upper compartment 6 contains a frozen meal 7 which comprises 400 g of a mixture of precooked beans and pieces of par-fried meat and pieces of raw carrots. The lowermost compartment contains 20 80 g of seasoned water.

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Figure 2 shows a package comprising a heat-resistant container 8, made of aluminium, and provided with a rim and a heat-resistant plastic lid 9. The lid is provided with venting holes 10, 11. The container is separated into two compartments by a dish shaped plastic partition 12, the bottom of which is perforated. The partition 25 bears on the rim of the container. The uppermost compartment 13 of the container contains 300 g of uncooked, chilled asparagus. The lowermost compartment 14 contains a mixture of 80 g of water and 15 g of butter at a temperature of 2°C.

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Figure 3 shows a package comprising a heat-resistant container 15, made of aluminium and a plastic lid 16. The lid has venting holes 17 arranged therein. The container is separated into three compartments by two partitions 18 and 19, consisting of perforated plastic and bearing on the shoulders 20 and 21 of the container. The lowermost compartment 22 contains 100 g of broth. The uppermost compartment 24 contains 200 g of precooked potatoes. The middle compartment 23 contains 150 g of diced raw chicken meat mixed with 75 g of par-dried peas.

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### Claims

1. A disposable package for cooking or heating foodstuffs comprising a heat-resistant container (8) divided into at least an upper (13) and a lower (14) compartment by a steam-permeable partition (12), at least one upper 40 compartment containing the foodstuffs, characterized in that the lowermost compartment contains an edible substance, comprising aroma and/or flavouring components.

2. A disposable package according to Claim 1, characterized in that the steam-permeable partition (12) is removable.

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3. A disposable package according to Claim 1, characterized in that the edible substance and/or the foodstuff is frozen.

4. A disposable package according to Claims 1, characterized in that the weight ratio of the edible substance to the foodstuff is less than 1 : 3.

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### Patentansprüche

1. Wegwerfbare Verpackung zum Kochen oder Erwärmen von Nahrungsmitteln, mit einem hitzebeständigen Behälter (8), der durch eine dampfdurchlässige Trennwand (12) in zumindest ein oberes (13) und ein unteres (14) Abteil unterteilt ist, wobei zumindest ein oberes Abteil die Nahrungsmittel enthält, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das unterste Abteil eine eßbare Substanz enthält, die Aroma-und/oder Geschmackskomponenten enthält.

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2. Wegwerfbare Verpackung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die dampfdurchlässige Trennwand (12) entfernbar ist.

3. Wegwerfbare Verpackung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die eßbare Substanz und/oder das Nahrungsmittel gefroren ist.

4. Wegwerfbare Verpackung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Gewichtsverhältnis der eßbaren Substanz zum Nahrungsmittel weniger als 1 : 3 beträgt.

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### Revendications

10 1. Un emballage jetable pour cuire ou chauffer des aliments, comprenant un récipient résistant à la chaleur (8) divisé en au moins un compartiment supérieur (13) et inférieur (14) par une cloison perméable à la vapeur (12), au moins un compartiment supérieur contenant les aliments, caractérisé en ce que le compartiment le plus bas contient une substance comestible, comprenant des composants d'arôme et/ou des agents de sapidité.

2. Un emballage jetable selon la Revendication 1, caractérisé en ce qu'une cloison perméable à la vapeur (12) est détachable.

15 3. Un emballage jetable selon la Revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que la substance comestible et/ou l'aliment sont congelés.

4. Un emballage jetable selon la Revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que le rapport en masse substance comestible-aliment est inférieur à 1 : 3.

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Fig.1.

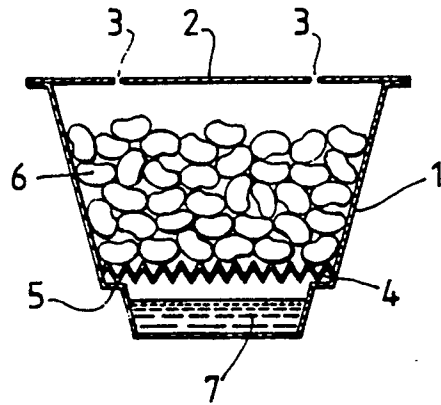


Fig.2.

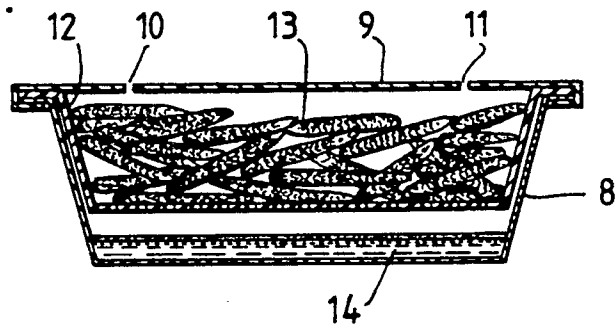


Fig.3.

