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(54) **Disposable napkin to wrap a food item to be held in hand for its consumption**

(57) A disposable napkin (1), for wrapping a food item (4) to be held in one's hand for its consumption, comprises two superposed layers, whereof a first layer (2) is made of absorbing paper and a second layer (3) is made of heat insulating, anti-adhesion and impermeable material;

the napkin can be wrapped around the food item (4) so that the second layer (3) defines a housing into which the food item (4) is inserted slidably. A method for preparing a food item (4) to be held in one's hand for its consumption comprises wrapping said napkin (1) around the food item (4).

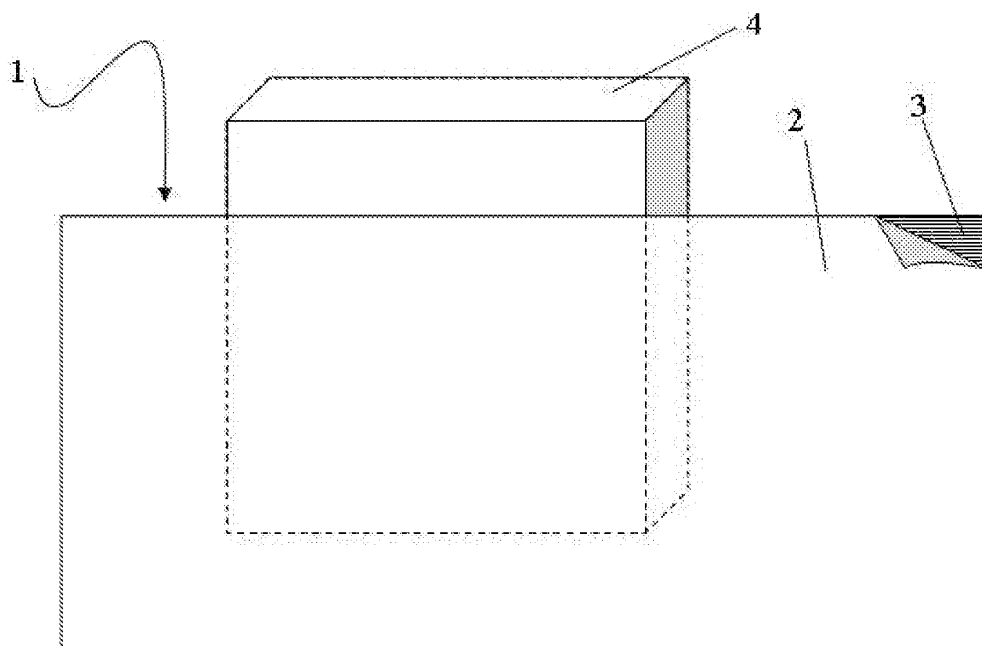


FIG. 1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a disposable napkin to wrap a food item to be held in one's hand for its consumption.

[0002] In the catering sector, and in particular in the sector of bars, diners, pubs, and other facilities of this kind, it is common practice to serve the foods to be held in patrons' hand during their consumption (e.g. sandwiches, toasts, grinders) partially wrapped in napkins.

[0003] Such napkins serve a dual function.

[0004] On one hand, the napkins enable the patron to hold the food in his/her hand without getting dirty or scalded; in this light, it should be noted that, in most cases, said foods are heated or cooked, to be then served hot.

[0005] Moreover, the same napkins can be used by the patron to clean his/her hands or mouth after consuming the food. In this light, it should be noted that persons often take a hot toast or sandwich at the bar counter, and then consume it outside or in their car, without having available any additional napkins or cleaning towels.

[0006] For this purpose, napkins made of absorbing paper (particularly suited for cleaning hands and for absorbing any liquid released by the food) are commonly used.

[0007] However, this kind of paper napkin has the drawback of adhering in undesired fashion to the food and, if liquids escape from the food itself (e.g. molten cheese, water coming from vegetables, or sauces), it becomes impregnated with them. Therefore, unwrapping the food, or removing the napkin from the food, becomes inconvenient, and there is the risk that fragments of napkin may remain attached to the food. This condition is made particularly severe if the food is hot, when it is wrapped with the napkin. Moreover, if the food is served hot, paper napkins also have the problem of not preserving the temperature of the food (which tends to cool rapidly and to scald the person who takes it in his/her hand to eat).

[0008] It should also be noted that wrapping foods of the type described above with a film made of plastic or metallic material (like aluminium foil) is known. Such solutions are used not so much to serve heated foods at the counter of a bar or of a diner (i.e., within the sector of the present invention), as to wrap foods to transport them (e.g. within backpacks or baskets). In said solutions, the films are used to wrap the foods, crumpling the film around the food to prevent the content of the sandwich or toast from leaking out during the transport. Therefore, these technical solutions do not serve the main function of the napkins of the invention, which is to enable a person to consume a food item holding it in his/her hand without getting dirty (after transport, to be consumed, the foods must first be unwrapped, whereupon said films lose substantially all usefulness). Moreover, they do not even make available means for cleaning one's hands or mouth, and in fact normally, in such solutions, normally napkins are used in addition to the film.

[0009] An object of the present invention is to eliminate the aforesaid drawbacks and to make available a disposable napkin for wrapping a food item to be held in the hand for its consumption, which enables to consume the food item, holding the napkin in one's hand, without getting dirty or getting scalded.

[0010] Another object of the present napkin is to allow to consume the food item, holding the napkin in one's hand, with no need to remove the napkin, i.e. to unwrap the food before its consumption.

[0011] An additional object of the present napkin is to be usable for wiping, after consuming the food.

[0012] Said objects are fully achieved by the napkin of the present invention, which is characterised by the content of the appended claims and in particular in that it comprises two superposed layers, whereof:

- a first layer of absorbing paper;
- a second layer of heat insulating material,

said napkin being capable of being wrapped around the food item so that the second layer defines a housing for the food item.

[0013] The second layer is preferably made of non-adhering, impermeable material, able to maintain in substantially rigid fashion the shape assumed as a result of being folded.

[0014] Yet another object of the present invention is to make available a method for preparing a food item to be held in one's hand for its consumption, without getting scalded or dirty.

[0015] Said method is characterised by the content of the appended claims and in particular in that it comprises the following steps:

- preparing a first layer of absorbing paper;
- superposing on the first layer a second layer made of heat insulating material to define a dual-layer napkin;
- wrapping said napkin around the food item with the second layer in contact with the food item, such as to define a housing for the food item.

[0016] This and other characteristics shall become more readily apparent from the following description of a preferred embodiment, illustrated purely by way of non limiting example in the accompanying drawing tables, in which:

- figure 1 shows a napkin according to the present invention;
- figures 2, 3 and 4 shows the napkin of figure 1, in successive stages of wrapping around a food item;
- figure 5 shows the napkin of figure 1 wrapped on a food item in different operative positions;
- figure 6 shows a perspective view of the napkin of figure 1.

[0017] In the figures, the reference number 1 designates a napkin according to the present invention. The napkin 1 comprises a first layer 2 made of absorbing paper and a second layer 3 superposed to the first layer 2 to constitute a multi-layer napkin.

[0018] The second layer 3 is originally made of a heat insulating material. Preferably, the second layer 3 is made of tinfoil; however, it may also be made of other materials, e.g. oven paper or aluminium foil.

[0019] Said first and second layer can simply bear on each other; alternatively, said first and second layer can be attached to each other, e.g. by folding an edge of the second layer 3 on an edge (i.e. along the perimeter) of the first layer 2.

[0020] Moreover, the second layer 3 is preferably made of anti-adhesion material (e.g. tinfoil or oven paper).

[0021] Additionally, the second layer 3 is preferably made of a material that is impermeable to liquids.

[0022] It should also be noted that both the first layer 2 and the second layer 3 must be foldable, hence made of materials that are not completely rigid. However, the second layer 3 is made of a material able to maintain its shape, i.e. a shape assumed as a result of being folded.

[0023] Operatively the napkin 1 is wrapped around a food item 1 to be consumed, in such a way that the second layer 3 is in contact with the food item 4 and the first layer 2 defines an outer coating of the second layer 3.

[0024] Therefore, the napkin 1 and in particular the second layer 3 of the napkin 1 define, originally, a housing in which the food item 4 is inserted as a result of the wrapping of the napkin 1 around the food item 1.

[0025] The fact that the second layer 3 is made of a material able to maintain its shape once it is folded enables, advantageously, to prevent said housing from deforming by the crushing of the napkin 1, when the person holds the napkin in his/her hand to consume the food item 4.

[0026] The fact that the second layer 3 is made of an anti-adhesion material favours a sliding of the food item 4 within said housing (all the more so if the food 4 is hot and releases molten cheese or other substantially sticky liquids). This enables, advantageously, to consume the food 4 without touching it with one's hands and without unwrapping it (i.e. without preventively removing the napkin 1), progressively extracting the food item 4 from the housing defined by the napkin 1, as the food is consumed.

[0027] The fact that the second layer 3 is made of a heat insulating material enables, advantageously, to avoid scalding one's hands and to maintain the temperature of the food item 4. It should be noted that the napkin 1 is particularly indicated to wrap a hot food item 4.

[0028] The fact that the second layer 3 is made of an impermeable material enables, advantageously, to avoiding wetting / dirtying one's hands while consuming the food item 4, by effect of the liquids that may leak out of the food item itself (especially if it is heated).

[0029] The fact that the napkin 1 comprises the first

layer 2 made of absorbing material (preferably absorbing paper) enables, advantageously, to wipe one's hands or mouth after consuming the food item 4, using the same napkin 1, and to further protect one's hands in contact with the napkin 1 against heat and any liquids.

[0030] It should be noted that the napkin 1 is originally folded around the food item 4 and not crumpled. The napkin 1 has to define a housing in which a product is movable by sliding (or by translation). Said housing is shaped substantially as a box body, having a base and a lateral wall.

[0031] In this light, the present invention also makes available a method for preparing the food item 4 to be held in one's hand for its consumption (or to be served for example at the bar), suitably folding the multi-layer napkin around the food item 4.

[0032] It should be noted that the food item 4 can be a hot food item at the time of the folding of the napkin 1, i.e. the napkin 1 is to be folded around the food item 4 immediately after a step of cooking or warming the food item itself.

[0033] Said method comprising folding the napkin 1 around the food item 4 so that the food item 4 is slidable around a housing defined by the napkin 1 itself.

[0034] For example, said folding comprises the steps shown in figures 1-4 considered in succession.

[0035] It should be noted that, once it is folded, the napkin 1 defines a housing in which the food item 4 is partially inserted. In other words, the folding operation occurs in such a way as to leave a portion of food item 4 projecting from the housing defined by the napkin.

[0036] This enables, advantageously, to bite into the food item from the start, holding the food item 4 in hand while touching only the napkin 1.

[0037] To complete the consumption of the food item 4, originally, the food item 4 is made to slide progressively, extracting it from the housing defined by the napkin 1 (as shown in figure 5), so that an additional portion of the food item is inside the housing, to be consumed.

Claims

1. A disposable napkin (1) for wrapping a food item (4) to be held in one's hand for its consumption, **characterised in that** it comprises two superposed layer, whereof:

- a first layer (2) of absorbing paper;
- a second layer (3) of heat insulating material,

said napkin being capable of being wrapped around the food item (4) so that the second layer (3) defines a housing for the food item (4).

2. Napkin as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second layer (3) is constituted by anti-adhesion material.

3. Napkin as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said second layer (3) is made of impermeable material.
4. Napkin as claimed in any one of the claims 1 through 3, wherein said second layer (3) is able to maintain in substantially rigid fashion a shape assumed as a result of being folded. 5
5. Napkin as claimed in any one of the previous claims, wherein said food item (4) is a hot food item. 10
6. Napkin as claimed in any one of the previous claims, wherein said second layer (3), when the napkin (1) is wrapped around the food item (4), defines a housing into which the food item (4) is inserted slidably. 15
7. A method for preparing a food item (4) to be held in one's hand for its consumption,
characterised in that it comprises the following steps: 20
- preparing a first layer (2) of absorbing paper;
 - superposing on the first layer a second layer (3) made of heat insulating material to define a dual-layer napkin (1); 25
 - wrapping said napkin (1) around the food item (4) with the second layer (3) in contact with the food item, such as to define a housing for the food item (4). 30
8. Method as claimed in claim 7, wherein a preventive step of heating / cooking the food item (4) is provided.
9. A method as claimed in claim 7 or 8, wherein the wrapping step is conducted in such a way as to allow a sliding of the food item (4) in said housing. 35

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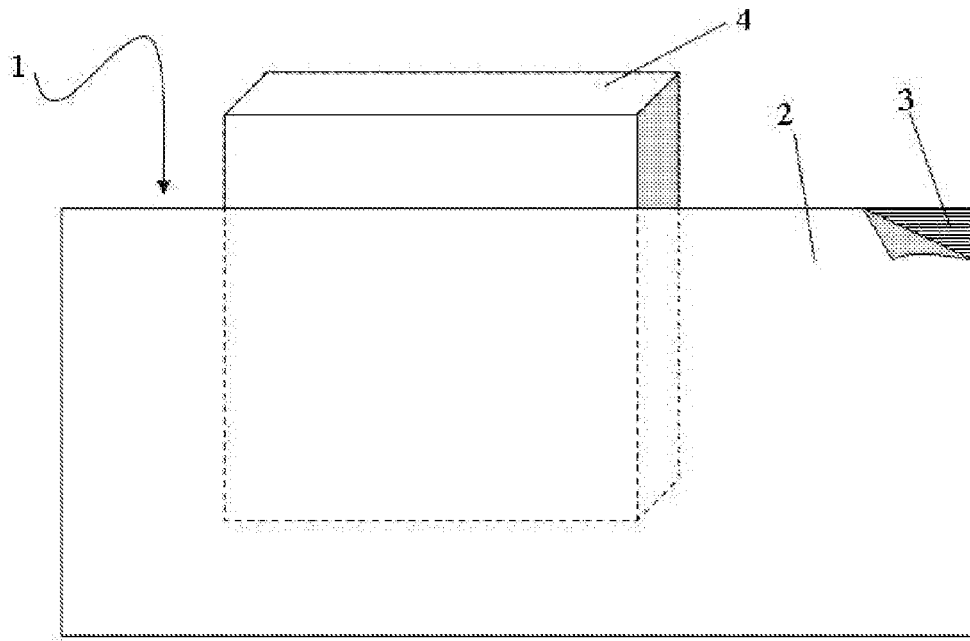


FIG. 1

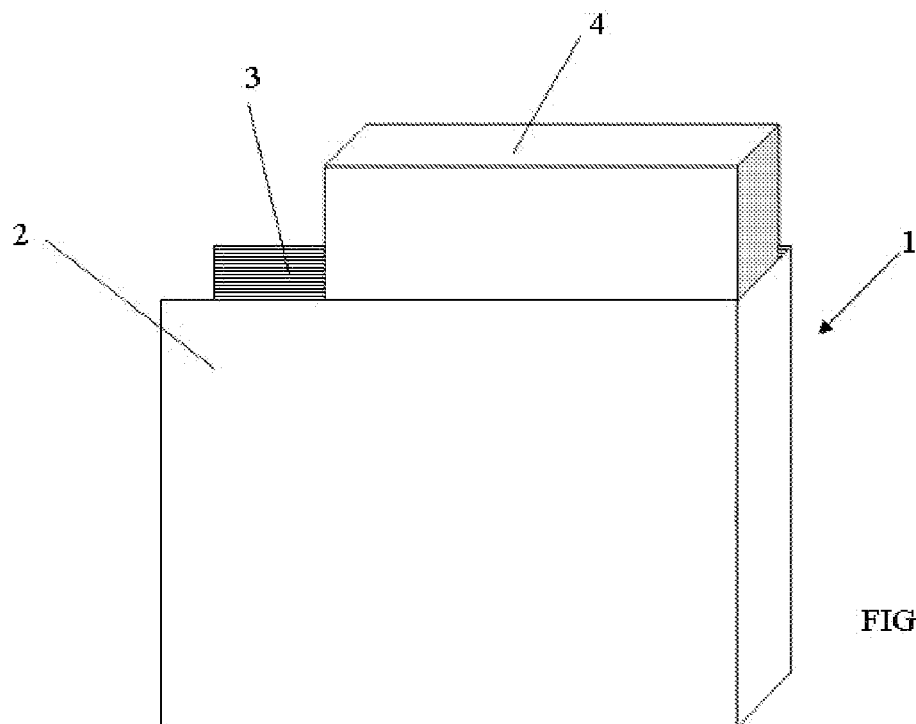


FIG. 2

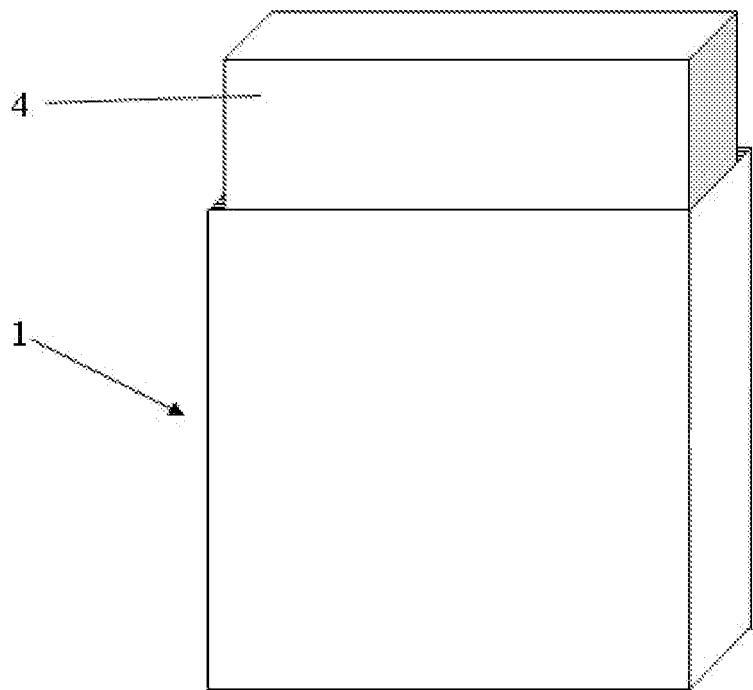


FIG. 3

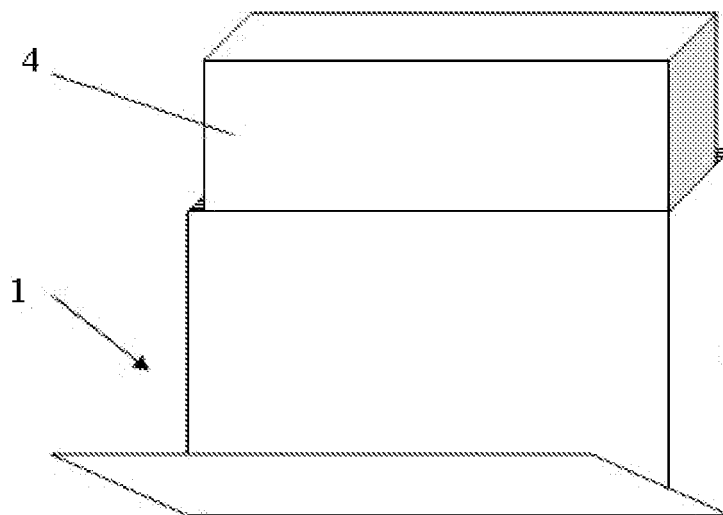


FIG. 4

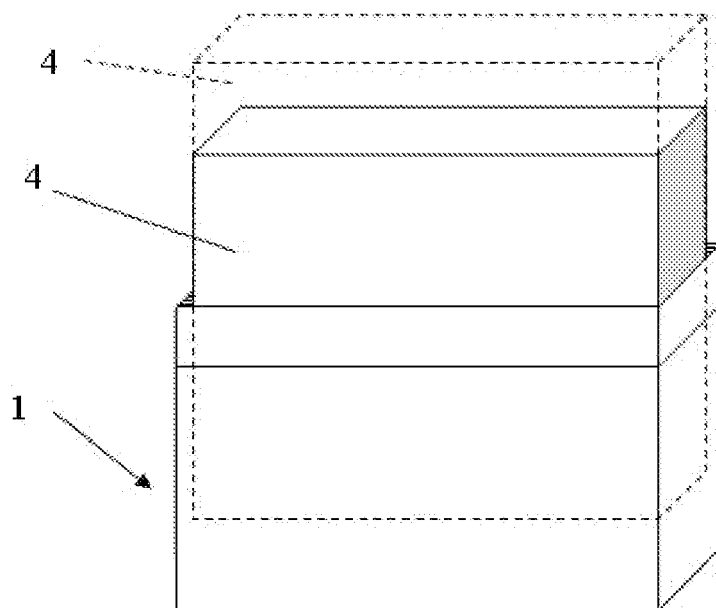


FIG. 5

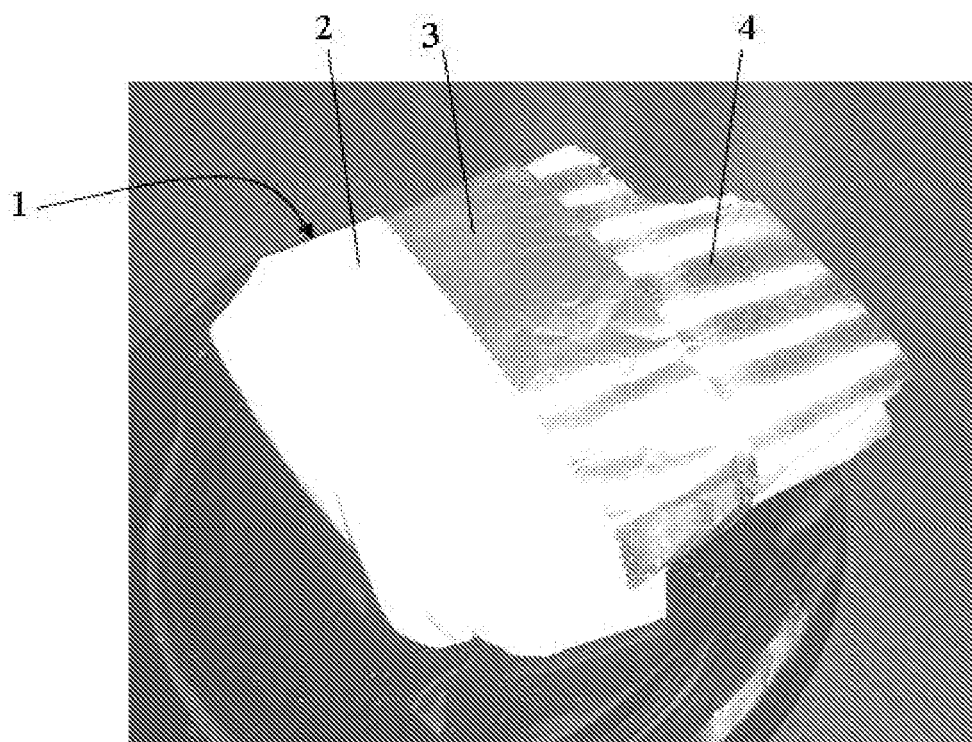


FIG. 6