

direct physical contact with the tool or whether a liner, including a replaceable or discardable liner is between the garnish and the surface of the tool. If the assembly tool has two cavities, one cavity may be a heel cavity and the other cavity may be a crown cavity, corresponding to the heel and crown halves of a bread component. The cavities preferably generally correspond to the cross-sectional area and shape of the bread that is to be used with the sandwich assembly tool. When an assembly tool containing sandwich garnish material is inverted over or onto an open sandwich roll or other bread component, the sandwich garnish in the heel and/or crown cavities (if present) falls or is otherwise deposited onto the heel and crown of the roll without spilling over. In one embodiment, the capacity of the cavity or of each of the cavities of the sandwich assembly tool is in the range of from about 100 to about 375 cubic centimeters.

[0010] In one embodiment, the sandwich assembly tool has a raised ridge between the two cavities. The ridge preferably has a suitable length, width, and height so that the ridge restricts sandwich garnish from entering the hinge area (the region of the roll or bun that connects the head to the crown) of a roll or a bun when the sandwich assembly tool is inverted and the contents are deposited on the roll or bun. This facilitates the construction of a neat, uniform sandwich and helps to prevent the sandwich roll or bun from breaking apart in the hinge area when the sandwich is closed. Also, the sandwich has a greater tendency to remain closed obviating the need to tightly wrap the sandwich to hold it together thereby also reducing compression of the sandwich materials. Thus, the ridge can facilitate sandwich preparation and reduce sandwich preparation time while increasing consumer convenience because the consumer does not have to remove a tightly wrapped wrapper to eat the sandwich. In addition, the ridge provides a neater and uniform presentation of the completed sandwich because sandwich garnish material and condiments are not in the hinge region and thus do not tend to migrate from one bread half to the other.

[0011] In accordance with one aspect of the invention, a sandwich assembly tool for making a sandwich composed of at least a bread component and sandwich garnish is provided comprising a member with two separate spaced apart cavities for holding sandwich garnish material to be applied to a bread component for a sandwich, each cavity having an opening located in substantially the same plane; and a quantity of sandwich garnish material contained in and in contact with at least one of the cavities. The cavities are of substantially equal size and volume. The tool may further comprise a peripheral planar area located adjacent and in substantially the same plane as the cavity openings and the planar area forming a peripheral region of the member and that is configured to permit a bread component to cover the cavities and overlap the planar area. The peripheral planar area has a width in the range of about 0.25 to about 2 inches and the planar area adjacent one cavity has the indicia "heel" and the planar area adjacent the other cavity has the indicia "crown." The sandwich assembly tool has a ridge extending upwardly between the openings of the two cavities. The ridge has a width in the range of from about 5 millimeters to about 17 millimeters and a height in the range of from about 2 millimeters to about 20 millimeters.

[0012] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, a method of making a sandwich composed of at least a bread component and sandwich garnish is provided, comprising

placing sandwich garnish material on a sandwich assembly tool. The sandwich assembly tool has a region for holding sandwich garnish material to be applied to a bread component of a sandwich and the tool comprises at least one cavity. Sandwich garnish is placed in the cavity, a bread component is placed over and adjacent the cavity and thereafter the sandwich assembly tool is inverted while the bread is adjacent and covering the cavity to cause the sandwich garnish to be deposited from the cavity to the bread component. In a sandwich assembly tool having two cavities, sandwich garnish is placed in both cavities, and the sandwich assembly tool is inverted while a bread component completely covers both cavities to cause the garnish in the cavities to be deposited on the bread component.

[0013] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, a sandwich assembly tool is provided, comprising a member having a single cavity for holding sandwich garnish material, the cavity having an opening located in substantially a single plane; and a peripheral planar area adjacent and surrounding the opening and in substantially the same plane as the opening. The peripheral planar area adjacent one region of the cavity is longer and wider than the cavity opening and has a width in the range of from about 0.25 to about 2.0 inches.

[0014] The sandwich assembly tool and method of making a sandwich allows sandwiches to be assembled quickly, and uniformly, thereby reducing the amount of time and labor needed to make a sandwich. Also, garnishes, sandwich fillings, and condiments can be assembled in advance of an order for a sandwich as desired. Sandwiches can be made more quickly by allowing multiple tasks in the preparation of a sandwich to occur simultaneously or substantially simultaneously rather than sequentially. In particular, the sandwich garnish, condiments, and/or sandwich fillings can be assembled during a slow period of the day in advance of busy sandwich order periods such as lunch and dinner and stored in a desired environment, such as a heated or refrigerated environment. This gives restaurants much more flexibility in scheduling employees and makes restaurants more efficient. When sandwich garnishes and/or fillings are assembled in advance, preferably the assembled sandwich garnish and/or filling is stored in the tool in an environment maintained at a temperature safe for foods. Typically, the environment is chilled or heated. Typical temperatures for chilled and heated environments are 33 to 40° F. and 140 to 210° F., respectively.

[0015] In one embodiment of the method in accordance with the invention, a sandwich assembly tool with at least one cavity is utilized. Sandwich garnish and/or condiment is put on the tool, the bread component placed over the cavity and thereafter the tool and the bread component is inverted over the bread component of a sandwich thereby depositing the sandwich garnish and/or condiment to the bread component. The bread component can be as desired and thus can be heated or unheated. Typically, a sandwich filling will thereafter be placed in the bread component of any desired type and temperature.

[0016] In another embodiment, the method uses an assembly tool having two separate cavities. In this method, sandwich garnishes are put into one or both of the two cavities of the assembly tool and optionally a condiment is applied in one or both of the two cavities. Next the tool is inverted