



Packaging Containers & Solutions

Disposable Containers

Pressware Paperboard, Aluminum, Alcan Tuxedo and similar disposable containers come in all sizes and shapes. Because they are disposable, they provide additional convenience to the consumer. Some personal chefs use disposable containers exclusively for all their clients while other personal chefs in the reusable camp use these only for one-time or short-term clients.

Even though some disposable containers are considered "rigid," as a safety precaution, you will want to instruct your clients to use something sturdy like a plate in the microwave; or a baking sheet in the oven; under aluminum or paperboard containers when heating. When transporting from oven to table, this will help prevent the container from buckling and spilling hot food.

Plastic Reusable?

GladWare and ZipLock are fairly new containers that cost between 30¢ and 50¢ each. Supposedly they are reusable and will last through many dishwasher loads, but getting clients to reuse them is another story. We have found that these containers may be widely available but they are not long lasting. They have a tendency to become very brittle after being frozen and therefore are considered disposable by most personal chefs.

Plastic Freezer Bags and Wrappers

Plastic zipper-closing freezer bags are best for packaging products with irregular shapes. They can be used for vegetables, some fruits, pastas and grains. They are also good for storing herbed tomato sauce and marinated meats and poultry that will be frozen. They are good containers for salads and grated cheese.

Plastic wrap and heavy-duty aluminum foil are similar to flexible bags except they are available in rolls and are cut to the desired size as they are used. They can be used before putting the food in a freezer bag. For example, you might wrap breads or muffins with aluminum foil before putting them in a freezer bag.

Pressware Paperboard Containers

Many personal chefs have discovered the benefits of the Pressed Paperboard containers that are designed for microwave or conventional oven use. Many personal chefs use these because of their versatility.

Aluminum Containers

Useful aluminum disposables are the loaf and tart pans, and the three-compartment trays. These are moderately priced and can be found at any grocery store; however, the available sizes can fluctuate from store to store. Also, you usually can obtain them from local restaurant supply stores or from your closest Unisource or Sysco via an 800 directory. With the proliferation of the Internet, you have a very good chance at finding them there, as well. Manufactured lids for these aluminum containers are not available. Therefore, when it comes to packaging food in these containers, you will need to use plastic wrap, heavy-duty aluminum foil or a combination of both. Firmly folding and crimping the foil around the edge of the container is very important in order to create a good seal.



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A somewhat new design on the market is Alcans Tuxedo Aluminum Containers. Because of their flashy black and gold color scheme they are hard to miss. They can cost twice as much as other disposable containers; however, heavy gauge aluminum is used to make the container and they are 2-3 times as durable as other disposable containers. More personal chefs have been turning to the Tuxedo line because it has sizes available that are much larger than other disposable containers plus snug fitting lids are available for all sizes. Consumer feedback also has been very favorable. The black aluminum / CPET , foil and some clear plastics are also a good choice.

Aluminum in the Microwave Oven

Yes you can “cook safe with aluminum foil containers in the microwave oven,” according to Alcan Foil Products, a Division of Alcan Aluminum Limited. According to their literature and website, independent labs have declared the uses of aluminum foil containers to be safe in modern microwave ovens when the following six steps are followed:

- ❖ Take off the lid - remove the lid from the aluminum container.
- ❖ Keep it full - make sure the food almost fills the container.
- ❖ Cover it up - loosely cover the aluminum foil container with microwavable plastic wrap or wax paper (this prevents splattering and traps steam for faster cooking)
- ❖ Raise it up - place the foil container on a plate or glass dish.
- ❖ Find the middle - position the aluminum foil container in the center of the microwave oven – at least one inch from the sidewalls (to prevent sparking, make sure the container is not touching any metallic surface)
- ❖ Turn it on - cook or heat food to desired temperature

Vacuum Sealing

Vacuum sealers have the distinct advantage of being able to eliminate air and create a very tight seal. Vacuum sealers have the great disadvantage of meal presentation value, and added work by the client to heat their meal. Some personal chefs use this packaging method, but these chefs are in the minority for sure.



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Pressware containers are only available through a distributor. These paperboard containers are a favorite with Personal Chefs because they are inexpensive, hold up well, clear plastic lids are available, are coated so liquids don't cause a problem, and can be placed in the oven up to 400 degrees for an hour (without lid). Accordion style corners expand out before food is put into the container, and this allows the lid to fit snugly. You can omit the lid and use clear cling wrap instead.

The manufacture is Pactiv.

Distributors normally sell lids separately, and usually sell containers by the case. A case will be 200-500 units, depending on the item being purchased. The three most popular sizes with Personal Chefs are:

5" x 6" x 1.375"

6" x 8" x 1.75"

7.75" x 10" x 1.5"

Conduct a Google or Bing search, or research the distributor below (ask about a USPCA discount).

This distributor also offers samples.

<https://www.webstaurantstore.com>

<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/samples>

USPCA
United States Personal Chef Association

USPCA members now receive exclusive discounts on select containers at

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Discounted pricing is available for
Premier, Provisional, and Corporate Owner members
on the four most popular Personal Chef containers available in the store

Black and Gold Diamond Foil

Smooth Silver Foil

Translucent Round Deli

Round Microwavable Heavyweight

To order, visit www.USPCA.com/Webstaurant