



Artifact of the Month

Penguin Server



Many a mid-century homemaker owned one of these – a Penguin Server. It was named so, partly because it sported a band of waddling penguins around its middle, but mainly because its shape looks like a stout little penguin.

The handles of the server (which are designed to look like the penguin’s flippers) and top knob were made either of wood or Bakelite. (Developed in 1907, Bakelite is the earliest form of plastic made from synthetic components.) Each server also came with a set of tongs that look like penguin feet.

The design for the Penguin Server was originally patented in 1941; however, the onset of WWII delayed its production. The war put a strain on U.S. supplies of basic materials, such as food, cloth, paper, gasoline, rubber, and metal. The federal government restricted the use of such materials for consumer goods until after the war.

With the end of rationing in 1945, factories could once again produce consumer goods. The Penguin Server began rolling off the line and into homes. The West Bend Aluminum Company of West Bend, Wisconsin produced the hot-and-cold servers from the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.

The server has double thermal walls to keep hot foods hot or cold foods cold. It proved to be the perfect solution for taking cold salads or hot baked beans to a picnic, a friend’s house, or church

supper. (At the Museum, we have used the Penguin as an ice bucket during our warm weather Open Houses.)



Here, we offer a recipe for potato salad, just in time for your Labor Day picnic. (It takes 1½ recipes to fill the 8-cup Penguin.)

Aberdeen's Cookin'

Deli Potato Salad

By Ruth Peters, Aberdeen Historical Museum, 2022

Makes about 5 cups

4 cups cubed potatoes (5 to 6 medium size)
2 eggs

generous ½ cup mayo
scant ½ cup sour cream
(mayo + sour cream = 1 cup)

2 Tbsp vinegar
1½ tsp dill weed
1½ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
¼ tsp paprika
1/8 tsp garlic powder

1 cup sliced celery (about 3 ribs)
½ cup chopped onion



1. Cook, drain, and cool potatoes. Hard boil the eggs; cool and peel. Set aside potatoes and eggs.
2. In a medium size bowl, stir together the mayo and sour cream, vinegar, dill weed, salt pepper, paprika, and garlic powder.
3. Stir in celery and onion. Chop eggs and add. Add potatoes and stir all together.
4. Cover and chill.

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- **Red potatoes** are good in this recipe.
 - Mike Nastari suggests kicking up the flavor by **increasing the pepper and garlic powder**, and **adding green onions** (in addition to the ½ cup of other onions in the recipe).
 - The author prefers to use **Hellman's Real Mayonnaise** and **whole milk sour cream**.