

LIFESTYLES ARCHIVE

Mouth-watering inventions

March 23, 2005

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For three days every year, Chicago is the housewares capital of the world. That's because we annually host the International Home and Housewares Show, a mammoth collection of every gadget, product or invention for the home.

The show wrapped up Tuesday, and since it's not open to the public, we're giving you a little taste of a few things that caught our eye:

CUP-A-CAKE: Where was this invention when we were in third grade?

The Cup-A-Cake is a nifty way to transport cupcakes without the mess. No more frosting freak-outs, because with this gadget cupcakes stay in place.

Two prongs under a plastic Tupperware-like container keep the treat from sliding around, keeping the frosted top intact. Turn them upside down, throw them to a pal or just drive over a pot-holed street, it doesn't matter. \$2.99.

WIRELESS REMOTE BBQ THERMOMETER PAGER: It seems that everyone enjoys a good barbecue -- except the chef, that is. That's because the poor guy has to stay next to the hot grill making sure the burgers his guests want cooked "medium" don't become well-done. And who wants to hang out next to the guy who's alone and next to hot coals?

Well, this new gadget will make barbecues more fun for everyone. It's a barbecue thermometer with a wireless pager. Stick the probe in the meat, set the desired temperature on your pager and walk away -- with the pager, of course.

When the meat has reached the temperature you want, the pager goes off. \$39.99.

ORKA: Now this is an oven mitt a man would be proud to handle. It's not one of those flimsy mitts that burns your hand if you're holding toast. The ORKA (named after a killer whale no less!) Silicone Oven Mitt is one of the most remarkable kitchen accessories to come around in decades. It looks cool and is impervious to just about anything a kitchen could throw at it.

It can resist temperatures of up to 600 degrees Fahrenheit -- the company says you can pull a lobster out of a pot of boiling water with it. We'd do that -- only with a tub of melted butter nearby. \$17.99.

THE PLATE CADDY: Sometimes we all wish we had another pair of hands -- but never so much as when we are in line at a buffet.

With drink in one hand and the other trying to balance a plate, we're left without a hand to scoop up salads, prick cheese cubes and dollop ranch dressing on our veggies. And forget about eating and drinking while standing at a social event -- humanly impossible. Or is it?

The Plate Caddy could be your answer. With it, you can hold your plate, beverage, utensils and napkin, all in one traylike contraption and with one hand while the other hand shovels it into your gullet!

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