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## Fit a Round Egg Into a Square Hole

Few items have survived all 15 relocations that Koel Thomae, co-founder of Noosa Yoghurt, has made through seven cities over the last 24 years. Yet through every new home, Ms. Thomae has held on to a square-egg maker.

Ms. Thomae used the device for the first time last week. It slowly molds a hard-boiled egg into a square over 12 hours in a refrigerator. "I have moved it with me since I was 17 years old and finally wondered why I have been waiting all this time?" says 41-year-old Ms. Thomae, a native of Australia who currently lives in Boulder, Colo. "Obviously I have a real attachment."

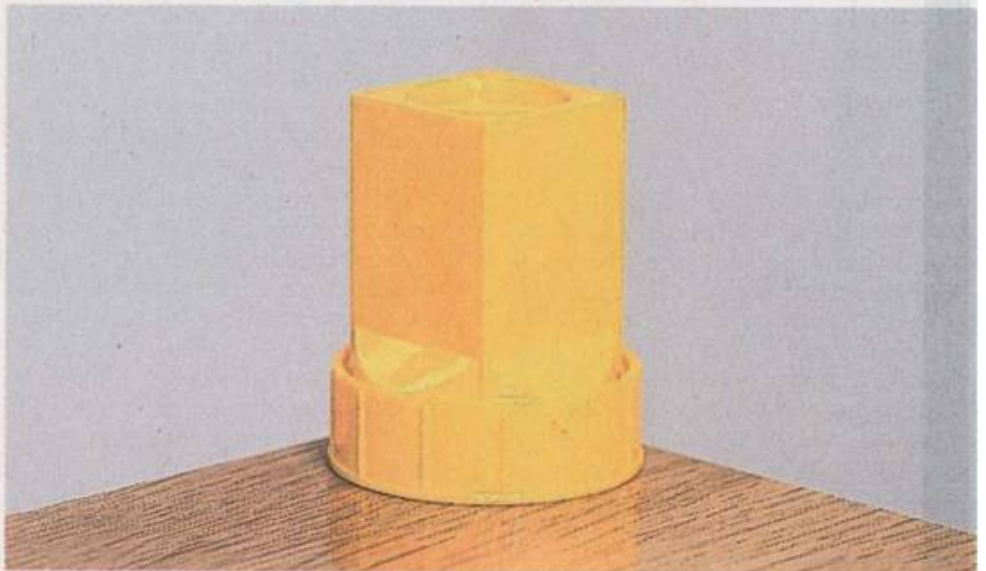
Ms. Thomae received the square-egg maker as a gift from her fun-loving mother, who wanted to help her daughter get established in her first university apartment. The squared eggs can be sliced to fit more exactly on square-shaped bread for sandwiches. Its novelty became a joke among her friends that Ms. Thomae plans to revive at a square-egg party she hopes to host one day as a reunion. "Who wouldn't want to go to a square-egg party?" she says.

The contraption's eccentric simplicity also helps inspire Ms. Thomae in her work running the fast-growing line of Noosa yogurts. When designing Noosa's packaging five years ago, money was tight at the startup company. "We wanted to show off the freshness of the product and let people see what they're eating, especially the fruit," says Ms. Thomae. "When we were starting up we were very scrappy and didn't have a lot of money to do a custom mold for the packaging."

Noosa's most economical option for see-through packaging was a round and squat 8-ounce tub, a large and unusual shape compared with other individual servings of yogurt on the market. "It's been great for us because it disrupted the category, it's not like anything else on the



Koel Thomae has moved 15 times, over 24 years, with her square-egg maker—a housewarming gift from her Australian mother.



shelves," says Ms. Thomae. "You can be disruptive without being highly innovative, just like the square-egg maker."

Meantime, the device serves as a happy memento of all the strange gifts she has received from her be-

loved mother, who still lives in Australia. "She's been doing that my whole life," says Ms. Thomae. "The square egg maker is the one thing that I've kept, it makes me smile every time I open my kitchen cabinet."

—Ellen Byron