

COOL CALM

YOUR

Thoughts

WITH

TATER

TOTS

*Calm Your Thoughts with Tater Tots:  
A Tater Tot Casserole Recipe Coloring Book*

Creative Works

California Polytechnic State University  
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This work was carried out as a part of the Robert E. Kennedy Library’s Creative Works Program, which consists of Catherine Trujillo, jaime ding, Isabela Presedo-Floyd ’20, Sasha Menshikova ’20, Natalie Priest ’20, and Jett Witlin ’22, with contributions from Russ White and Laura Sorvetti—all tot experts. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of Robert E. Kennedy Library.

We acknowledge the land on which we have formulated this publication as situated within yak tit’u tit’u yak tithini Northern Chumash homelands. The yak tit’u tit’u people are Indigenous to the San Luis Obispo region. They have lived in areas from Ragged Point to Carrizo Plain, Santa Maria to Morro Bay, since time immemorial and into the present. We acknowledge the colonialism upon these lands and are grateful to these lands upon which we are guests.

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# CALM YOUR THOUGHTS WITH TATER TOTS

## **A TATER TOT CASSEROLE RECIPE COLORING BOOK**

*Calm Your Thoughts with Tater Tots: a tater tot casserole recipe coloring book was crafted by student assistants and staff from Robert E. Kennedy's Creative Works department during spring quarter 2020. The coloring book was created as a grounding project for creativity, encouragement, and relaxation, following adrienne maree brown's #pleasureactivism, and offers an example of how to use virtual resources offered by the library.*

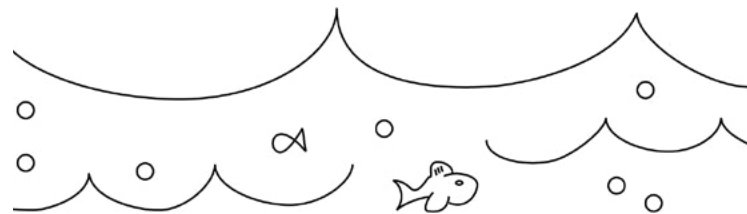
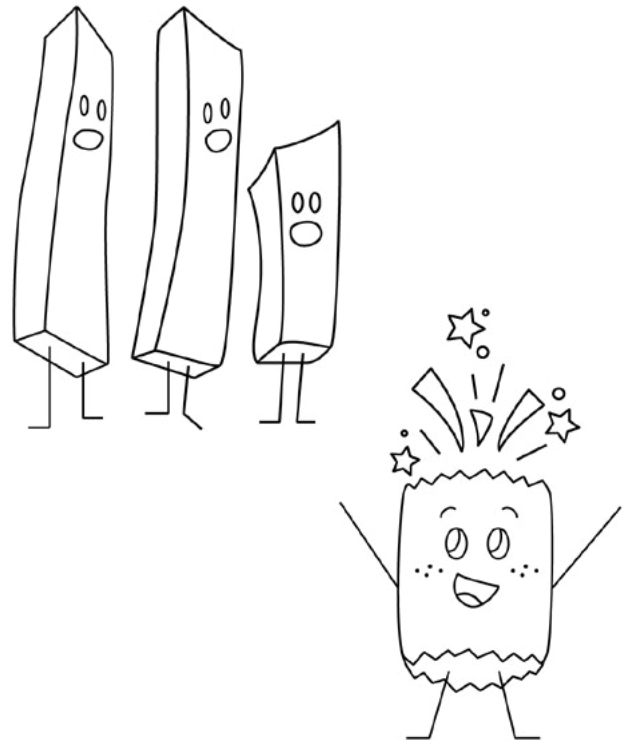
# TATER TOTS

## AN OVERVIEW

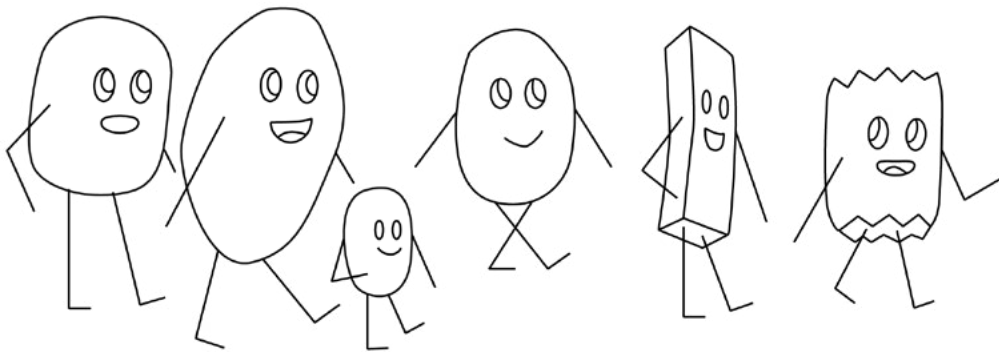
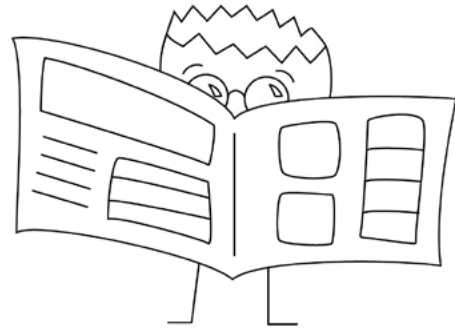
By Natalie Priest

From side-dish to main-dish tater tots are either much beloved or maligned. First conceived in 1953 by two brothers – Golden Grigg and Francis Nephi Grigg, they prudently invented the tater tot as a means to use the leftover potato scraps from their frozen french fry business. These frozen food entrepreneurs started selling corn and potatoes door-to-door eventually co-founding Ore-Ida Foods. Their tater tot invention received its moniker from a company-wide naming contest won by Clara Lay Orton.

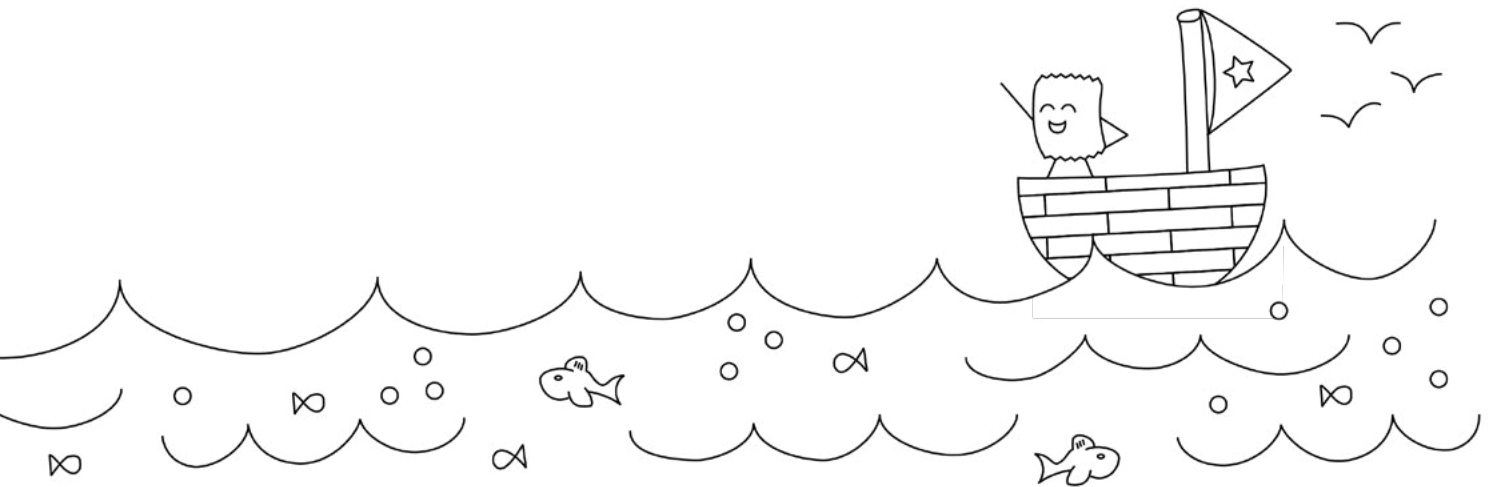
Widely deemed the most versatile veggie, potatoes are a staple for the imaginative incarnation of Ore-Ida's Tater Tots, a staple of kids meals, school lunches, and the oh-so-delicious Tater Tot Casserole – these originally repurposed "potato scraps" do their part in continuing the long history of the potato. According to culinary historian Andrew F. Smith, it is believed that early American hunter-gatherers encountered potatoes as early as 14,000 years ago. At this time there were "235 different species of potatoes" that could be found in South America, Central America, and the North American Southwest. Potatoes, as a commercial crop, found their way to North America by way of Scotch-Irish immigrants and by way of European colonization, they were introduced to Africa and the South Pacific. In the United States specifically, many states produce an abundance of potatoes, with the majority produced in Idaho. From their encounter with early American hunter-gatherers to today's mass cultivation Idaho farm fields, potatoes have come a long way.



Tater Tots themselves have a cult following. These greasy, savory bites are loved by most, and devoured by all in school cafeterias. They are referenced in movies and songs, reinforcing their cultural relevance. The tater tot is of special importance in the San Luis Obispo community where it can be found in many different incarnations throughout town. A college (and beyond) staple, they are even mentioned in editions of the Cal Poly's student newspaper found in University Archives at Kennedy Library.



*the evolution of the tater tot*





# TATER TOT CASSEROLE RECIPE

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package of Ore Ida Tater Tots (size depends on your personal tot appetite)
- 1 large can of Cream of Mushroom soup (Campbell's Condensed Family Size Cream of Mushroom Soup, 22.6 oz. is a good choice)
- 1lb ground beef or ground turkey
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Garlic powder to taste

## TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:

- 9" or 2 qt casserole dish
- Oven
- Elastic stretch pants

## SERVING SIZE AND NUTRITION FACTS:

Depending on an individual's tot-tolerance, maybe 2-10 servings.

Nutritionally, this dish is a 10 on the comfort-food scale.

## COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven according to the directions on the Ore Ida Tater Tot package



2. In a large skillet, cook ground beef or turkey over medium heat until done; drain. Season with salt and pepper and some of the garlic powder.



3. Spread cooked ground meat into the bottom of the casserole dish.



4. Dump in the can of Cream of Mushroom soup and mix well with meat. Spread evenly in the casserole dish.





5. On top of this meat/soup mixture layer the tater tots evenly. Add as many as your tot preference can handle. Try not to double layer though.



6. Place the casserole in the oven and bake according to the instructions on the Ore Ida Tater Tot package.



7. Once done, eat.

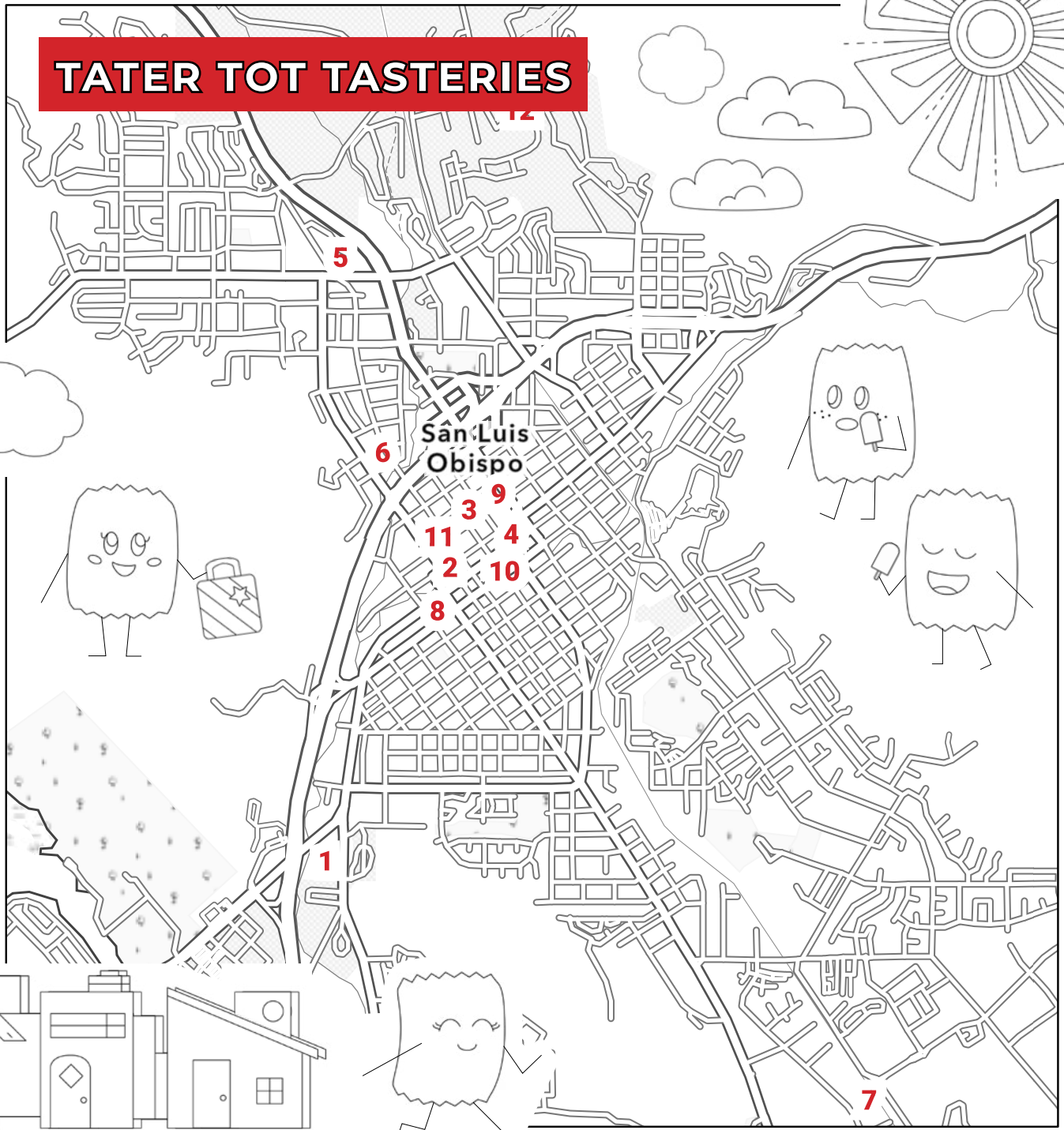
### RECIPE ADAPTATIONS FOR VEGETARIANS:

Substitute ground meat with Impossible Burger or other non-meat alternative!

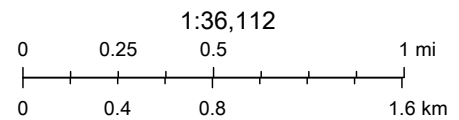




# TATER TOT TASTERIES

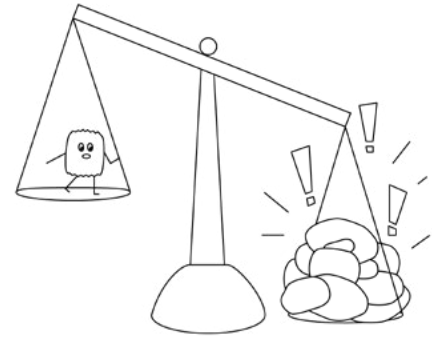


- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Central Coast Brewery     | 8. Kreuzberg Coffee Company |
| 2. Blast825 Taproom          | 9. Finney's Crafthouse      |
| 3. Libertine Brewing Company | 10. Black Sheep             |
| 4. Woodstock's               | 11. Sidecar                 |
| 5. Milestone Tavern          | 12. 805 Kitchen             |
| 6. Lincoln Deli              |                             |
| 7. SLO Brew Rock             |                             |



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

DID YOU KNOW?  
 DID YOU KNOW?  
 DID YOU KNOW?  
 DID YOU KNOW?  
 DID YOU KNOW?  
 DID YOU KNOW?



In 1986 the *Mustang Daily* published two articles mentioning Tater Tots

One specifically mentions the baking of Tater Tot Casserole in Muir Hall. As the rules regarding in-dorm cooking limited the students to just “one-piece popcorn poppers and one unit coffee pots,” a good amount of creativity was necessary in the making of various dishes such as Muir Hall’s Tater Tot Casserole. The article identifies “Cal Poly ingenuity in action” in relation to these tasty taters (*Mustang Daily*, April 16, 1986, Pg. 5).



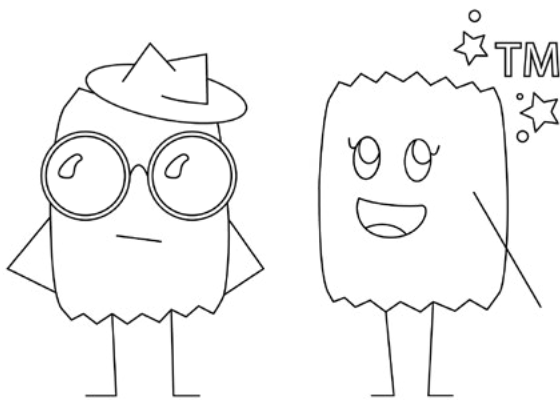
Courtesy: University Archives, Robert E. Kennedy Library

The other interviews Cal Poly alumni Weird Al. Weird Al famously utilized the acoustics of a Graphic Arts building bathroom in the recording of his “My Bologna,” a parody of “My Sharona” by The Knack. *The Mustang Daily* mentions his song lyrics “Your belly aches, your teeth grind/ Some tater tots would blow your mind/ And you don’t mind if they’re not cooked/ You need your fix. I guess you’re hooked” from his parody of Robert Palmer’s “Addicted to Love” (*Mustang Daily*, November 7, 1986, Pg. 2/4).

Potatoes are a good source of vitamins c and B6, as well as zinc, iron, and potassium.

Each year, Americans eat 70 million pounds of Tater Tots.

After the Spanish conquest of Peru, taxes were collected in the form of potatoes.



*not a tot?*

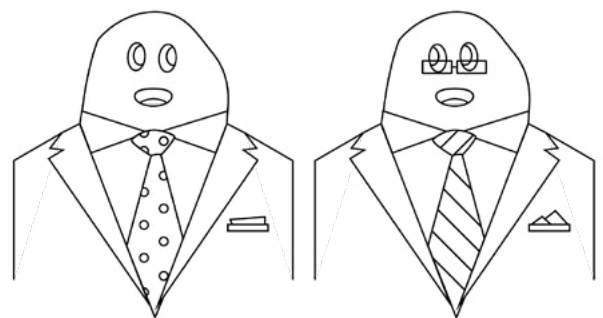
The most potatoes grown from a single tuber is 370 lbs, according to Guinness World Records.

Many brands tried to compete with Ore-Ida's trademarked Tater Tots with names such as "Spud Puppies" and "Tasti Taters."

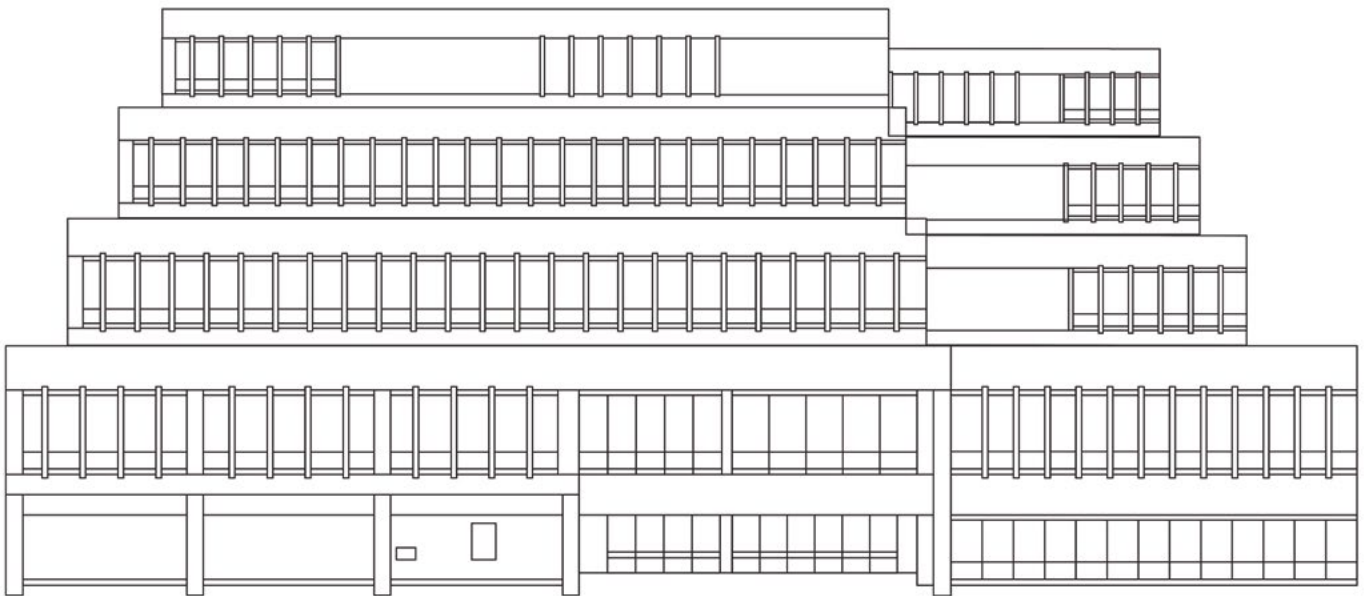
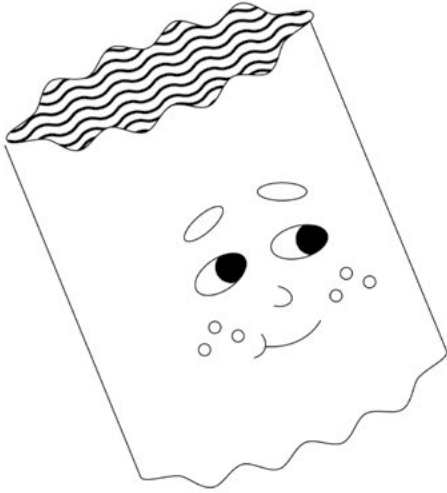
Tater Tots began as a way to utilize the seemingly useless left overs from the cutting of French fries.

Secretary of State John Kerry and Foreign Minister of Russia Sergei Lavrov traded potatoes in 2014, signifying friendship between the two countries.

Potatoes were such an important part of the Mochica and Incan cultures that they worshipped a potato goddess named Axomama.



# ROBERT E. KENNEDY LIBRARY



# TATER TOT TIMELINE

**10,000 BCE**

Andean farmers likely domesticate the common potato, *S. tuberosum* (Smith 11)



**500 BCE**

Andean civilizations begin to depict potatoes in pottery (De Ferrière Le Vayer)



**1532 CE**

Spanish "Conquistadores" first arrive and transport potatoes back to Europe (Smith 15)

**1664 CE**

John Forester asserts in his book, *Englands Happiness Increased*, that the cultivation of potatoes will prevent future famine (Smith 31)



**1715 CE**

Potatoes now grown in Germany, France, and the Rhine Valley (Smith 30)



**1732 CE**

Ricard Bradly's *Discourse Concerning the Improvement of the Potato* published (Smith 58)



**1800 CE**

Potatoes now cultivated in Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine (Smith 30)



**1842 CE**

Potato blight discovered in Philadelphia, PA (Smith 36)



**1845-1851 CE**

The Potato Famine

**1953 CE**

Tater Tots invented by F. Nephi Grigg (Roberts 37)



**1961 CE**

Ore-Ida "Tater-Tots" trucks were on the move, shipping tater tots to all 50 states

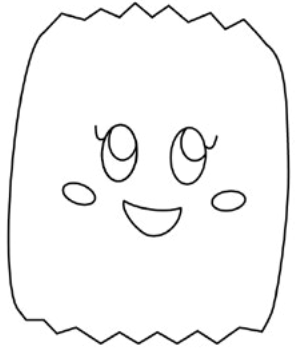
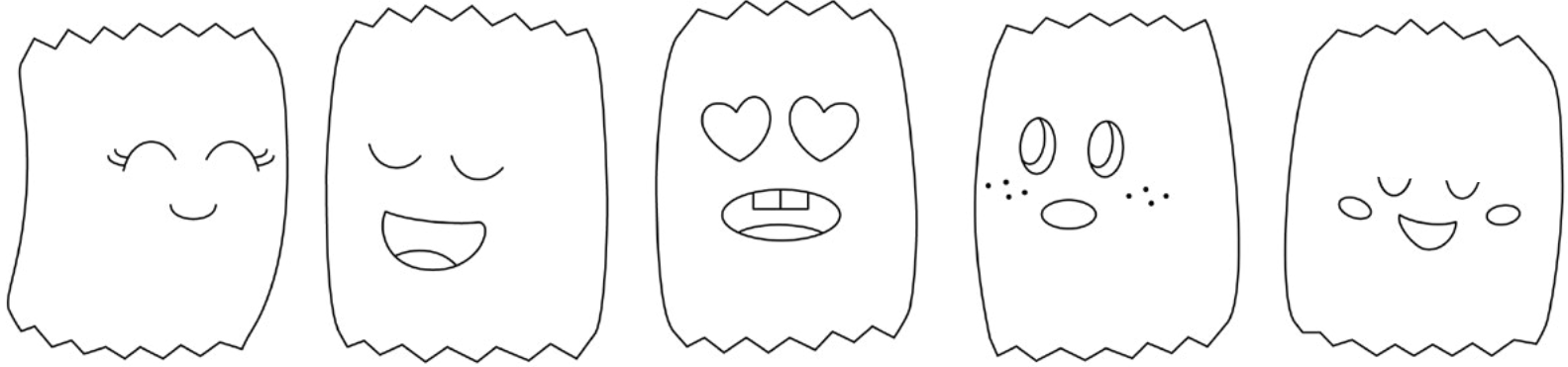


**1986 CE**

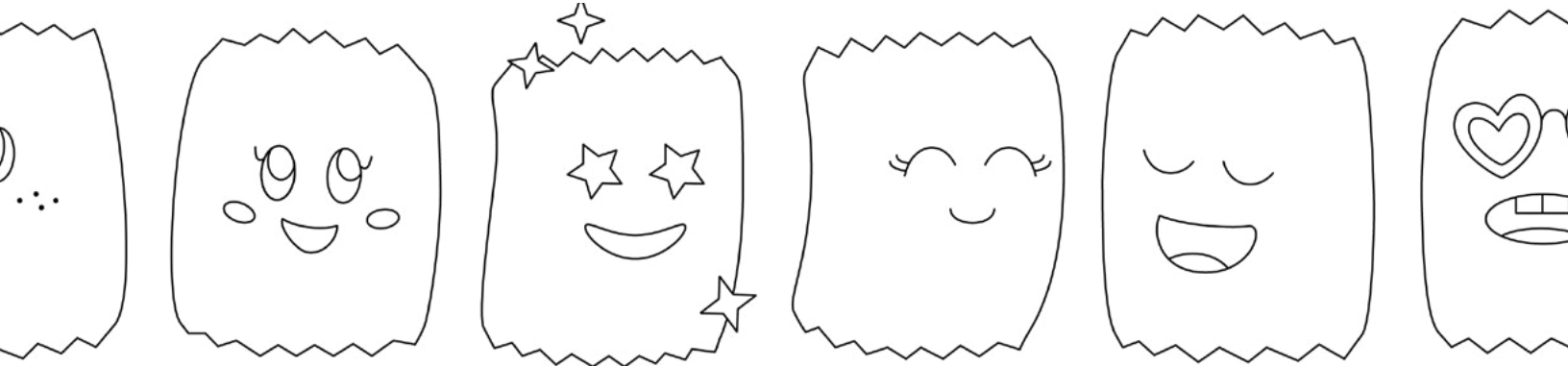
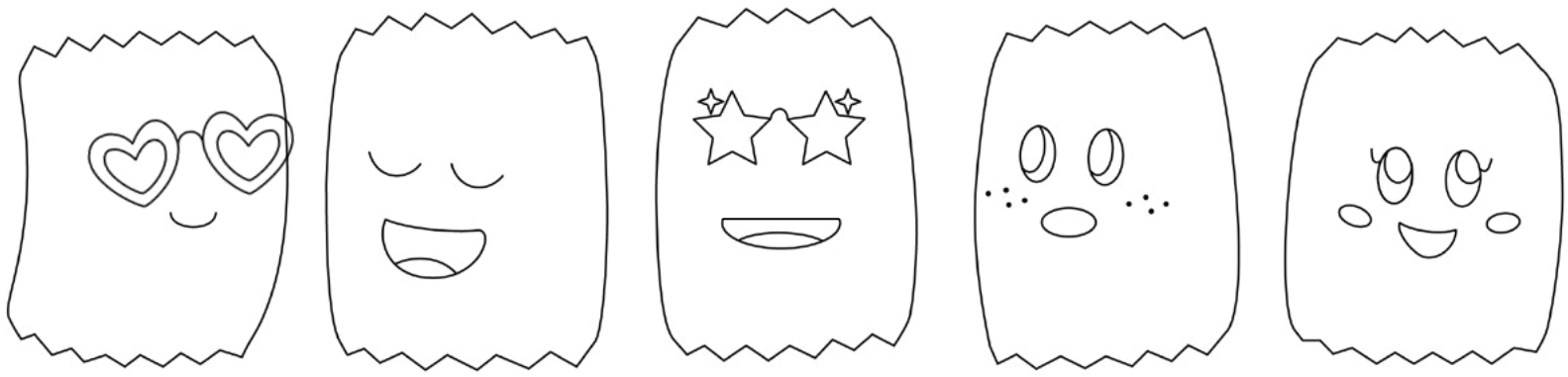
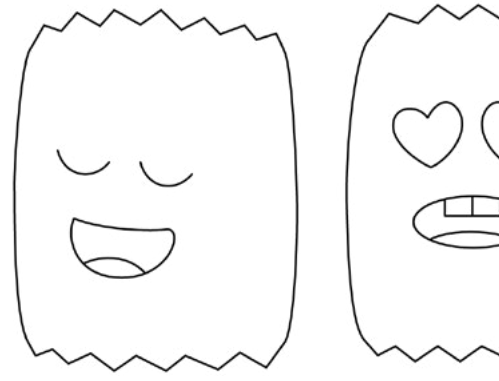
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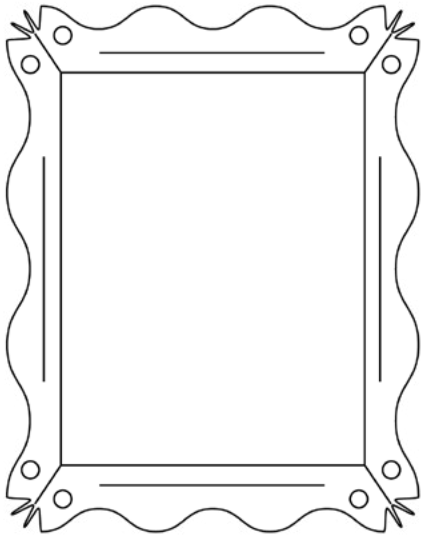






**MEET  
THE  
TEAM**  
**BEHIND THE TOTS**





You! Draw yourself as a tater tot (or potato) and introduce yourself.

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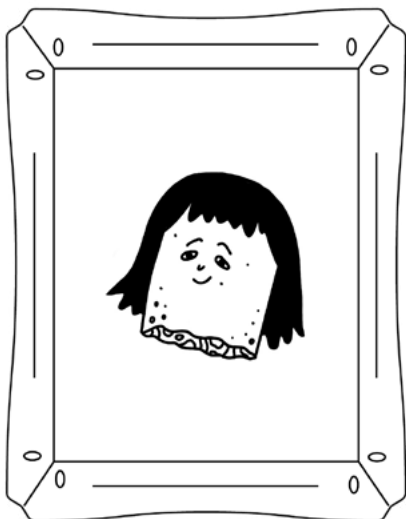
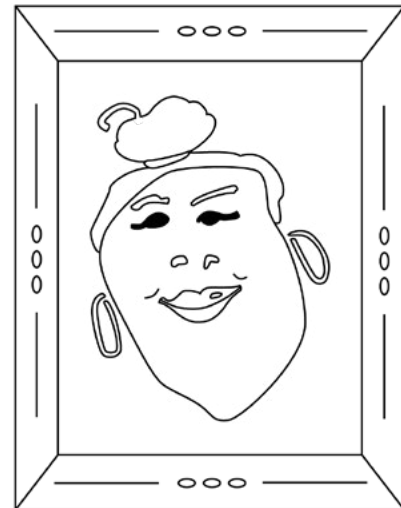
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## JAIME DING

jaime ding works in Creative Works at the Robert E. Kennedy Library, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Before Kennedy Library, jaime worked with trash for years, beginning in the history and visual arts departments, learning from questions about cleanliness, beauty and value within things and on streets. She loves snacks, trash, and accessible resources. Heap all of the toppings on some tater tots: especially the bacon bits and the Parmesan cheese.



## SASHA MENSHIKOVA

Sasha Menshikova (ART '20) is a fourth year Art & Design student from San Mateo, California. She serves as the Co-President of Cal Poly AIGA and is passionate about using her position to support diversity in design. She is the executive producer for The Nightcap Sketch Comedy Team. She works at Kennedy Library as a Design Student Assistant for the Exhibit Program. Driven by an interest in thoughtful and helpful design, Sasha wants to design digital products that enrich life instead of cluttering and confusing it.

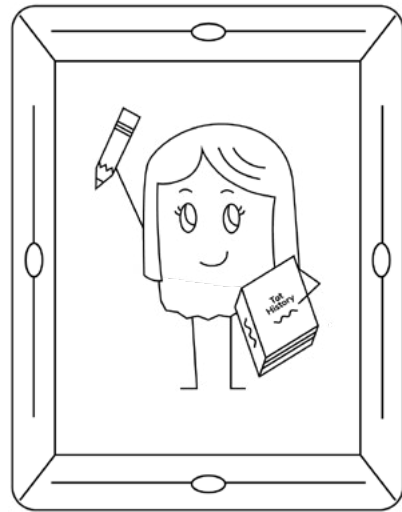


## ISABELA PRESEDO-FLOYD

Isabela (ART '20) is the Digital Publishing Student Assistant for Kennedy Library's Creative Works Department. When she's not working at the library, you might find her planning events for AIGA Cal Poly, reviewing manuscripts for *sprinkle: an undergraduate journal of feminist and queer studies*, designing for Project Jupyter, or counting the number of Japanese magnolias on Cal Poly's campus. Her favorite tot topping is jalapeños.

## NATALIE PRIEST

Natalie Priest is a senior Cal Poly English student with a minor in Art History. She grew up in the Village of Arroyo Grande on the central coast of California and now works as an art collection intern for Kennedy Library's Creative Works Department. In the fall she will pursue a teaching credential at Cal State LA's Charter College of Education. In the future Natalie plans to teach both English and Art History at the high school level. Her favorite tot topping is bacon.



## LAURA SORVETTI

Laura Sorvetti is the Reference and Instruction Specialist at Kennedy Library's Special Collections and Archives. She assists students, faculty, staff, and the research community to access and use primary sources in their research. She prefers her tater tots with a side of ketchup.



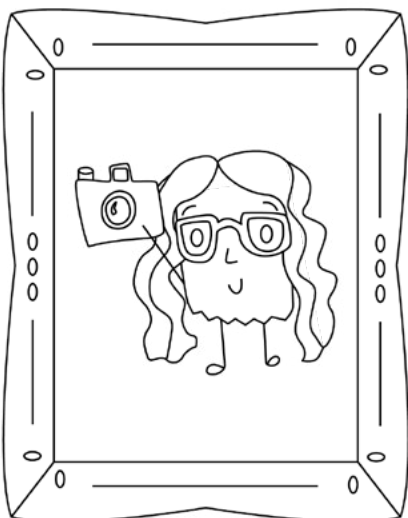


## CATHERINE TRUJILLO

Curator Catherine Trujillo oversees Robert E. Kennedy Library's Creative Works Program, which supports alternative approaches to scholarship with a commitment to support and amplify underrepresented topics and voices – by shaping, sharing, and fueling stories with collaborators in art, exhibits, and digital publishing. Her favorite tot topping is Cholula.

## RUSS WHITE

Russ White is the Data and GIS Specialist at Robert E. Kennedy Library. Through workshops, instruction, and consultations, he assists users across disciplines as they incorporate data and technical resources in their work. Since encountering the books of Edward Tufte as a graduate student, Russ has been interested in teaching (and practicing) data visualization as a pathway for strengthening data literacy. His favorite tot topping is plain old ketchup.



## JETT WITLIN

Jett Witlin is a second year Art & Design major (Photography & Video Concentration) at Cal Poly. She grew up in the South Bay of Southern California. In the future, Jett plans to work as a fashion and editorial photographer building a diverse body of work, as changes in technology accelerates more opportunities for visual artists. Her favorite tater tot topping is ketchup.

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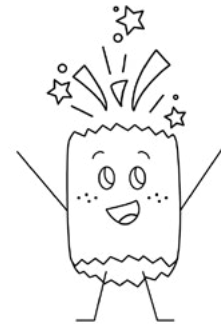
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Tip: Be sure that you are logged in to your Cal Poly account when using these resources!





Prescription for Cooking: Casseroles, including Breads. Montgomery, Ala: [Favorite Recipes], 1968. Print.

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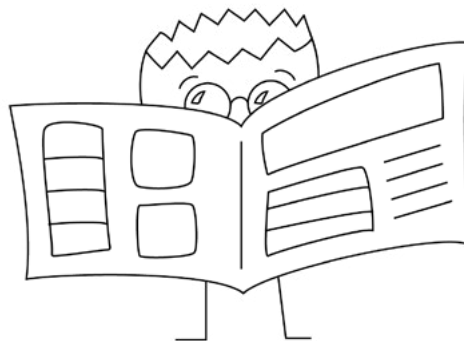
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Hi! My name is 

 Tater tot   