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TIMELINE OF A TOY: Mr. Potato Head

by Judith Gabriel

Mr. Potato Head, a beloved toy for more than 50 years, has transformed a lot over time since its introduction to the toy market.

1949

A potato is born.

George Lerner, a toymaker from Brooklyn, New York, comes up with the idea for a Mr. Potato Head toy. He invents parts that kids can stick into a real potato to make different faces.

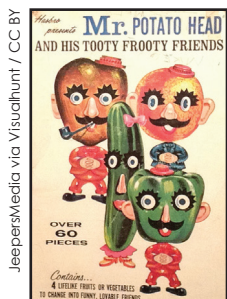
After striking out with the toy companies, Lerner presents his toy idea to a leading cereal company and gets lucky. The cereal company loves the idea and begins to put Mr. Potato Head parts in its cereal boxes. The Mr. Potato Head parts are a hit!

Continued on
next page

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1952

Hasbro begins to sell Mr. Potato Head.



Hasbro, a major toy company, is impressed by the cereal box success of Mr. Potato Head and picks up George Lerner's invention for its 1952 product line. The box that Mr. Potato Head comes in only includes the Potato Head parts—the actual potatoes are not included.

That same year, Hasbro makes the first-ever toy commercial for TV that shows kids how they can push the Potato Head parts into real potatoes—or any other vegetable—to make funny faces. Unlike modern versions of the toy, the Potato Head parts include a body and legs—features that make Mr. Potato Head look more like a real person than a legless lump.

1953

Mrs. Potato Head is born.

Mr. Potato Head toys sell so successfully that Hasbro decides to introduce Mrs. Potato Head as a companion for Mr. Potato Head.

1950s

A growing family of potato heads.

Hasbro introduces Potato Head children: Brother Spud and Sister Yam.

*Continued on
next page*



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1964

Plastic potato now included.

Hasbro includes a plastic potato with the parts in the Mr. Potato Head box. There are two reasons for this. The first is safety; young children are choking on the small parts and cutting themselves on sharp edges. The second reason is that moms are complaining about finding rotten potatoes under their children's beds!

1975

The potato head family grows in size but loses its legs.



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Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head grow—literally. To meet new toy safety standards, Hasbro doubles the size of the plastic potatoes and the Potato Head parts. It also stops producing the Potato Head legs and bodies for the same reason. Now the Potato Heads are legless, but not footless.

1995

A star is born!

Mr. Potato Head becomes a movie star. He stars in the movie *Toy Story* as well as in the sequels to the movie, *Toy Story 2* and *Toy Story 3*.

