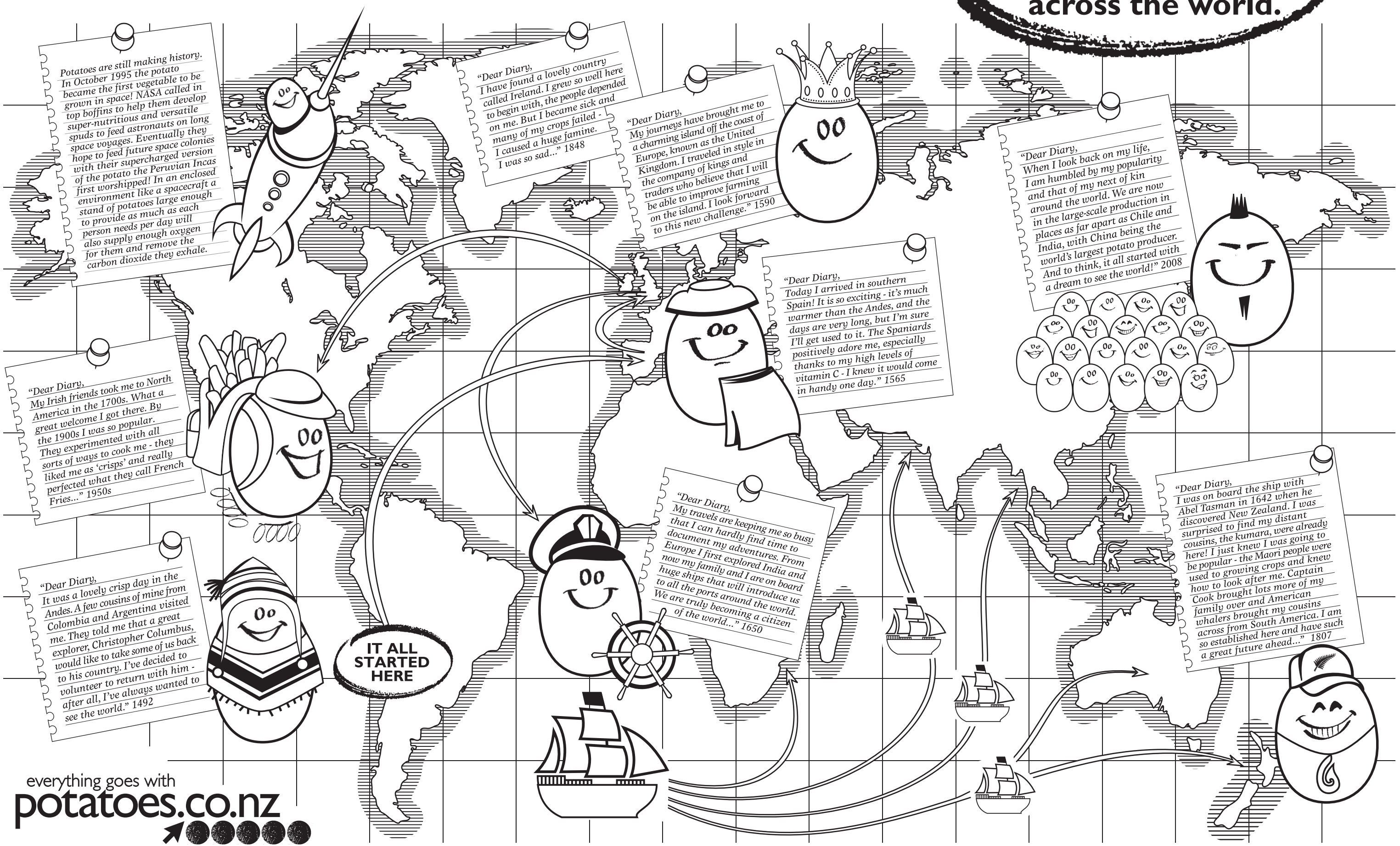


MR POTATO'S DIARY

How a humble potato, with a dream, became famous across the world.



Potatoes are still making history. In October 1995 the potato became the first vegetable to be grown in space! NASA called in top boffins to help them develop super-nutritious and versatile spuds to feed astronauts on long space voyages. Eventually they hope to feed future space colonies with their supercharged version of the potato the Peruvian Incas first worshipped! In an enclosed environment like a spacecraft a stand of potatoes large enough to provide as much as each person needs per day will also supply enough oxygen for them and remove the carbon dioxide they exhale.

"Dear Diary, I have found a lovely country called Ireland. I grew so well here to begin with, the people depended on me. But I became sick and many of my crops failed - I caused a huge famine. I was so sad..." 1848

"Dear Diary, My journeys have brought me to a charming island off the coast of Europe, known as the United Kingdom. I traveled in style in the company of kings and traders who believe that I will be able to improve farming on the island. I look forward to this new challenge." 1590

"Dear Diary, When I look back on my life, I am humbled by my popularity and that of my next of kin around the world. We are now in the large-scale production in places as far apart as Chile and India, with China being the world's largest potato producer. And to think, it all started with a dream to see the world!" 2008

"Dear Diary, Today I arrived in southern Spain! It is so exciting - it's much warmer than the Andes, and the days are very long, but I'm sure I'll get used to it. The Spaniards positively adore me, especially thanks to my high levels of vitamin C - I knew it would come in handy one day." 1565

"Dear Diary, My Irish friends took me to North America in the 1700s. What a great welcome I got there. By the 1900s I was so popular. They experimented with all sorts of ways to cook me - they liked me as 'crisps' and really perfected what they call French Fries..." 1950s

"Dear Diary, It was a lovely crisp day in the Andes. A few cousins of mine from Colombia and Argentina visited me. They told me that a great explorer, Christopher Columbus, would like to take some of us back to his country. I've decided to volunteer to return with him - after all, I've always wanted to see the world." 1492

"Dear Diary, My travels are keeping me so busy that I can hardly find time to document my adventures. From Europe I first explored India and now my family and I are on board to all the ports that will introduce us to the world. We are truly becoming a citizen of the world..." 1650

"Dear Diary, I was on board the ship with Abel Tasman in 1642 when he discovered New Zealand. I was surprised to find my distant cousins, the kumara, were already here! I just knew I was going to be popular - the Maori people were used to growing crops and knew how to look after me. Captain Cook brought lots more of my family over and American whalers brought my cousins across from South America. I am so established here and have such a great future ahead..." 1807

IT ALL STARTED HERE