



Make Asteroids You Can Eat!

Ingredients:

- Potatoes (enough to make 4–8 cups of mashed potatoes).
- 1 cup grated cheddar (or other kind) cheese.
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) of butter or margarine.
- Salt and pepper, as you like it.
- Extra butter or margarine to grease the cookie sheet and, if you like, to melt over the hot asteroids before you eat them

Note: *The cheese will make the asteroids more delicious, but when it melts, the asteroids might go flat. If you want more realistic asteroids that don't taste quite as interesting, leave out the cheese.*

Utensils:

- Depending on how you make your mashed potatoes, you might need a pot and a potato masher or electric mixer
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Oven mitt or pot holders
- Cookie sheet



Process:

1. Turn on your oven to 375° Fahrenheit (190 Celsius).
2. Take a little slice of the butter or margarine and rub it evenly on the cookie sheet so the asteroids won't stick. (You might want to use a paper towel for this so your fingers don't get all messy—yet!)
3. Make the mashed potatoes. Make a lot (8 cups) or a little (4 cups).
4. Add the cheese (if you want), butter, salt and pepper to the potatoes and mix well. The mixture should stick together. If it's too dry, add a little milk. If it's too moist, add a little flour (start with 2 tablespoons).
5. Take a handful of potatoes (about 1/2 cup or more) and shape it into your own idea of an interesting asteroid shape. Use your fingers to poke dents in it for craters.



6. Set the asteroid on the greased cookie sheet.
7. Use all the potatoes to make asteroids. (If you have lots of asteroids, you may need another cookie sheet. Or bake the first ones, then regrease the cookie sheet and make some more.)
8. Put the cookie sheet full of asteroids in the hot oven for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until they are brown. Using the hot pads or oven mitt, remove the cookie sheet from the oven, and using the large spoon, transfer the asteroids to a serving plate.
9. Enjoy your asteroids!



Here are a few real asteroids to give you some ideas. (These rocks are not all the same size, even though they look nearly so in these pictures!) The one on the left is Gaspra, in the middle is Ida, and at the right is Dactyl (which is actually a tiny "moon" of Ida). All these pictures were taken by the spacecraft Galileo.