

The Constant Changes in Asian Potato Chips

Over the last four centuries, the potato has come a long way from the American Andes. Since its cultivation in Spain in the middle of the 16th century, it quickly travelled to Asian countries, thanks to European immigration and the colonialists. The arrival of the potato brought along potato products including our favorite snack - potato chips.

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It is said that travel changes people, making them more open and aware of the world around them. The same thing happened to potato chips in Asia.

They started to look and taste different, adopting and using local spices and colors. Since their arrival, the chips sector has grown and flourished, embracing a constant change like the way of "living". In the Asian region, the five top brands of potato chips, according to data provided to us by Euromonitor, are Calbee, Lay's, Koikeya, Orion and Jack 'n' Jill. In the following text, we will take a look at their origins, brands and approaches to their packaging designs.

CALBEE

Calbee Inc is a major Japanese snack food maker, which was founded in 1949. In 1967, it gained wide acclaim at the international snack fair in New York. This recognition encouraged the company to spread its business and, a few years later, it established Calbee America. Over the next years, it spread its business all over the region and the world.

In 1975, it launched its first potato chips. This was not the company's first snack made from potatoes. Three years earlier it introduced Saporito Potato, a packaged potato snack. The newer version of this snack, the Jagarico potato snack was introduced in 1995 and, in 2006,

Jagabee was launched. Both products are packaged in plastic cups and are very popular. When it comes to offering potato snacks that are not in the shape of potato slices, Western markets are very shy. However, in Asia, you can indulge yourself with pre-packaged potato sticks, which have a similar appearance to French fries. The above-mentioned Jagarico and Jagabee are two of these snacks.

The classic Calbee potato chips are packaged in bags and come in several flavors. Along with typical barbecue, hot and spicy, or sour cream and onion combinations, they also offer flavors that are made from traditional ingredients, for example, seaweed. The newest additions to their range are chips that are seasoned with soy sauce, avocado and wasabi, and a deep cut

Deepo. All of these products were launched in the last two weeks. The tempo of launching new products in Japan is extremely fast. By the time this article reaches you, the Calbee brand will be at least five or six new products richer, or, possibly even a dozen.

To analyze the design, I chose several packages of Calbee potato chips that are now available on the Asian market. All of them have two things in common - the big red logotype and the simple drawn mascot showing a personification of a potato wearing a hat and ribbon. The background is monochromatic and different colors are used to represent different flavors. The bags are illustrated with potato chips that look like they are falling to the bottom of the package and filling the bag.

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LAY'S

PepsiCo, the world's biggest manufacturer of snack foods and the owner of the Frito-Lay, teamed up with Calbee six years ago in an attempt to sell more snacks overseas. Not only did it manage to meet its goal but also, it managed to become, together with Calbee, one of the leaders in this part of the world. For illustration, in 2014, the Calbee and the Frito-Lay Japan together held 53.9 per cent of snack market shares in Japan.

As the most [popular potato chips in the US](#) and the brand that has an international recognition, [Lay's](#) presents itself in the most direct and simple way in Asia. The base design of the Lay's [potato chips bags](#) is very clean and straightforward. The big logotype, one color, a couple of chip slices and a modest flavor illustration are the only elements that are shown on the package. The Lay's logotype is very prominent, big and strong. These characteristics allow it to change into kanji or other regional characters and still remain evident.

Over the last couple of years, many brands from all over the world have adopted the same approach to the design of potato chips, trying to achieve an equivalent feeling. Some of them look as good as the original but none of them have managed to come close in terms of international recognition. One brand that shares a similar look is the Indian brand, Bingo!, which was launched in 2007 and is owned by the ITC conglomerate company. Bingo! Yumitos is one of the four sub-brands in the company's portfolio.

In India, PepsiCo entered the market in 1989 and quickly became one of the largest food and beverage businesses. It introduced Lay's in 1995, mainly targeting the younger consumers and offering international and Indian flavors such as India's Lime 'n' Masala Masti and India's Magic Masala. The Frito-Lay uses the same strategy in other Asian markets, mixing international and regional preferences. For instance, in China, you can try Lay's with the most unusual flavors like Numb & Spicy Hot Pot and Hot & Sour Fish Soup, and "for a dessert", Cool & Refreshing flavors of Cucumber or Kiwi.

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KOIKEYA

The Koikeya is the second largest manufacturer of savory snacks in Japan. It is a subsidiary of Frente, a Japanese producer of snacks and confectionery products in Taiwan, founded in 1958 in Tokyo. As previously mentioned, in this country, developing and launching a new product or flavor takes a matter of weeks. The result of this is a large portfolio of products and a constant change of tastes among consumers. The Koikeya offers a number of potato snack ranges. These ranges are constantly expanding and continue to surprise their consumers with new flavors and textures.

One of the company's [potato chips ranges](#) is named Karamucho. It consists of a number of hot-spiced flavors and follows it with the design elements that are strong and angular.

The other range that I want to introduce as a counterpart to the Karamucho is the Sour Mucho. When comparing the visual language of these two brands, one can notice that the latter is designed to be more gentle and feminine. This is achieved through the use of soft, tender colors and rounder shaped letters. Even the small, added elements are placed in round shapes. Both of the ranges share the need to be fully covered with graphics and are a representation of the rich and playful Japanese style that cannot be easily obtained in Western culture.

ORION

The Orion Confectionery is a South Korean company that was established in 1956 under the name, Tongyang Confectionery Corp. It is headquartered in Seoul and is one of the three largest food companies in the country. The company's main production facilities are based in Russia, China, Vietnam and Korea. Orion's confectionery and snacks are exported to more than 60 countries worldwide.

One of the potato snacks that it produces is the Orion Yegam. This is similar to Pringles and is baked in the oven. It comes packaged in a long cardboard box with an octagonal base. Unlike the unusual shape of the package, all of the other graphic elements are similar to the average potato snack. There is a stack of chips, a large logotype and the manufacturer's name is placed by the near the top margin. This sounds simple but the overall look is quite crowded.

The logotype itself is very big and enhanced with several different frames. The bottom part of the package looks much lighter than the top part, which makes the whole package have an unbalanced feel. Additionally, the colors that are used for the background are strong and look good when you observe the packages separately. However, as a range, they lack unity. The Orion Oh! potato snack is another brand with an exclamation mark in its name. Similar to the above-mentioned product, these are not

[potato chips](#) as we define them but a close relative. It is interesting because they come shaped like hollow French fries, with a dip included inside the package. From the designer's point of view, it is interesting due to its illustrated chef that stands in the metallic background and glares at the illustration of the dip in front of him. When designing a small package, it is not very common to use metallic backgrounds and third dimensions. Furthermore, the colors that are used for this range are in much better correlation than on the Orion Yegam.

Only in Asia can they find their favorite snack "dressed" in seasonings that they could not even imagine.

JACK 'N' JILL

The latest of the big five potato chips brands in Asia is Jack 'n' Jill. This is owned by Universal Robina Corporation, a subsidiary of the JG Summit Holdings, which is one of the largest conglomerates in the Philippines. Jack 'n' Jill is one of the company's three strongest brands of salty snacks and confectionery in the region. Some of its salty snacks that are made from potatoes are Piattos, Roller Coaster and classic chips. The former are made in a hexagonal shape. The logotype also has a hexagonal shape. The letters and the hexagon are designed in the same "neon glowing" manner to construct a unified object that serves as the main element of recognition. The Roller Coaster potato snacks are made for children. The package is much more scattered and the product has a shape of rings that can easily become a toy and a snack in one.

Since March this year – at the beginning of my review - Jack 'n' Jill has partnered with Japan's Calbee and made a Philippines' snack mega-brand, entitled Jack 'n' Jill Calbee. With this partnership, "Japan's favorite potato chips", which are simply named potato chips, got the new design for this market. The name of the product and the claim are written in playful typography. However, all of the other elements are decent and "quiet" including the soft colors that are used for the background.

In popular culture, potatoes are still linked to America and [potato chips](#) are a North American product. However, the Eastern part of the world is rapidly changing their habits and replacing their rice-based snacks with potato chips and snacks. Not only is the Asian market a perfect place for manufacturers of this snack at this very moment but also, for the consumers and travelers from Western countries. Only in Asia can they find their favorite snack “dressed” in seasonings that they could not even imagine.

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