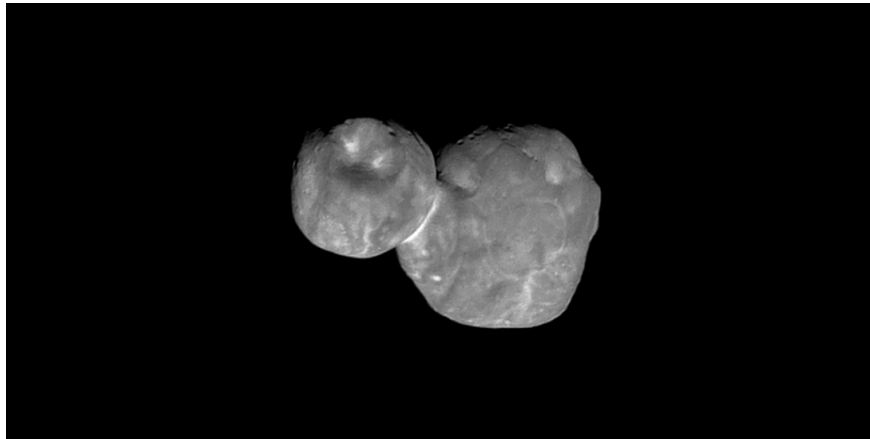


NASA did April Fools' Day perfectly this year, with a funky potato

The joke is on an asteroid named Arrokoth.

At a time of global crisis sparked by the coronavirus pandemic, 2020 has not felt like a good year to deliver April Fools' Day pranks. But we can make some exceptions for sweet, gentle and genuinely funny jokes.

Thanks, NASA, for giving us a good giggle with the Astronomy Picture of the Day (APOD) for April 1, 2020.



NASA's APOD typically features "a different image or photograph of our fascinating universe" along with an explanation from an astronomer. Wednesday's image is titled "Asteroid or Potato?" You might have to look twice to answer that question.

Asteroid or Potato: <https://t.co/7xthr4cKTH> by Jack Sutton pic.twitter.com/8zZvIpnCn8
— Astronomy Picture Of The Day (@apod) April 1, 2020

The image, by Jack Sutton, is indeed a potato, but it bears an uncanny resemblance to asteroid Arrokoth (formerly known as Ultima Thule). NASA's New Horizons mission viewed the fascinating and faraway space rock during a flyby in early 2019.

Images from New Horizons showed a strange two-lobed shape, which has been likened to a pancake or a snowman. As it turns out, a funky potato seems to be its best doppelganger.

Before you launch a spacecraft loaded with an industrial-sized peeler, keep in mind this science tidbit from NASA: Arrokoth may look like this potato, but the asteroid is "about 200,000 times wider and much harder to

eat."

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