

= The Crepes of Wrath =

" The Crepes of Wrath " is the eleventh episode of The Simpsons ' first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 15 , 1990 . The episode was written by George Meyer , Sam Simon , John Swartzwelder and Jon Vitti , and was directed by Wes Archer and Milton Gray . In the episode , Bart is sent to France on a student exchange trip , where his hosts treat him as a slave . Meanwhile , an Albanian student takes Bart 's place in the Simpsons family , and shows great interest in Homer 's work at the nuclear power plant .

The episode received generally positive reviews from critics , and in 1997 , David Bauder from TV Guide named this episode the greatest episode of The Simpsons , and the 17th greatest episode of any television show of all time .

= = Plot = =

Homer trips over Bart 's skateboard and falls down the stairs , hurting his back , and is confined to the couch for several days . Marge sends Bart to clean his room and while doing so , he discovers an old cherry bomb among his things . At school the next day , he decides to flush it down the toilet in the boys ' restroom with friends , Milhouse , Richard and Lewis . On the same day , Principal Skinner 's mother is visiting the school and Bart ends up pulling his prank the same time Principal Skinner 's mother is using the facilities in an adjacent girls ' restroom . The resulting explosion blows her off of her seat and enrages Skinner . In order to punish him , Skinner proposes deportation to Homer and Marge , by having Bart participate in a foreign exchange program . They decide to send Bart to France , while the Simpsons host a student from the Socialist People 's Republic of Albania , named Adil Hoxha . Bart is shown a picture of a lovely château in the heart of France and he immediately agrees to go , much to Homer and Skinner 's delight .

In France , Bart arrives at " Château Maison " , which is actually a dilapidated farmhouse on a run @-@ down vineyard . He is greeted by two unscrupulous , abusive winemakers , César and his nephew Ugolin , who proceed to treat him like a slave . Bart is starved while being made to carry buckets of water , collect and crush grapes , sleep on the floor , and test wine contaminated with antifreeze .

Meanwhile , in Springfield , Adil arrives and turns out to be very friendly , helping out Marge with the family chores . Homer immediately takes a shine to him , and it is noticeable that he is a better son and role model than Bart ever was . However , Marge challenges Homer that while she appreciates Adil 's good behavior , part of being good parents is that they have the same respect for their natural children , in that is Homer being concerned for Bart while he is abroad . Unbeknown to the family , Adil is actually a spy sent by his government to obtain blueprints of the Springfield nuclear plant 's reactor . Homer unwittingly takes him on a tour of the power plant and thinks nothing of the many photographs Adil takes , which Adil sends home by a secret fax machine in Bart 's tree house .

When Bart is sent by his captors into town to buy a case of antifreeze , he sees a gendarme and tries to ask for help , but the gendarme does not understand English and only gives Bart a piece of candy . Bart walks away , despairing over his own stupidity , then suddenly begins speaking French to himself . Realizing he has become fluent in the language , he runs back to the gendarme and tells him about the winemakers . The winemakers are swiftly arrested and Bart finishes his stay in France being hailed as a hero . He is awarded a medal for his bravery and he is kissed by a French beauty queen . Back in Springfield , Adil is caught by the FBI , forcing him to be sent back to Albania in exchange for their own child spy . Bart returns to his family , bringing them gifts from France . Back at home trying out the gifts , Homer has difficulty opening a wine bottle , but is pleased to hear Bart speak French , oblivious that Bart has just called him a buffoon .

= = Production = =

" The Crepes of Wrath " was the first episode of The Simpsons for which George Meyer was credited as a writer , and he wrote it together with Sam Simon , John Swartzwelder and Jon Vitti .

The episode was inspired by the French movie *Manon of the Spring*. The writers were trying to figure out which country the foreign exchange student should come from when they came up with Albania. They had not seen many uses of the country on television and decided to make the episode a tribute to actor John Belushi, who has Albanian roots. The writers did not know much about the country and could not think of a good name for the boy so they gave him the surname Hoxha after the former leader of Albania, Enver Hoxha. They used real Albanian in the scene where Adil says goodbye to his family, and they tried to get the actual language right at Sam Simon's instigation. They also used real French in the scenes of Bart in France. The writers did some research on a certain airport in France for the shots of Bart at the airport in Paris. Principal Skinner's mother, Agnes Skinner, made her first appearance on *The Simpsons* in this episode, although her voice was a bit different from what the viewers are used to in the later episodes of the show.

César and Ugolin are named after the peasants from the 1986 French films *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*. Bart's French gift to Maggie is a reference to *Le Ballon Rouge*, a short French children's film. On the way to the chateau, Bart and Ugolin cycle past scenes depicted in several famous paintings, notably *Bassin aux nymphéas* by Claude Monet, *Champ de blé aux corbeaux* by Vincent van Gogh, *Le rêve* by Henri Rousseau and *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Édouard Manet. The choice of antifreeze as an adulterant is a nod to the 1985 diethylene glycol wine scandal. The episode's title is an obvious reference to John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast, "The Crepes of Wrath" finished 29th place in the weekly ratings for the week of April 9 – 15, 1990 with a Nielsen rating of 15 @. @ 9. It was the second highest rated show on the Fox Network that week.

"The Crepes of Wrath" received generally positive reviews from critics. Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood, the authors of the book *I Can't Believe It's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide*, said the episode was a "Tour de Force" and that this was "perhaps the first episode to make the viewer's jaw drop at the audacity and invention of the series' makers". In a DVD review of the first season, David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of 2 @. @ 5 / 5, adding: "While the laughs are a bit dry in this episode, the over the top plot is indicative of zaniness to come." Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review that "it's clear that the writers had started to find their groove by the time this episode was produced. From start to finish, 'Crepes' offered a solid experience, as the show began to feature more style and subtlety." Scott Collura at Hollywood Video praised the episode in a review, saying "it is one of the best of the first season." In 1997, David Bauder from TV Guide named this episode the greatest episode of *The Simpsons*, and the 17th greatest episode of any television show of all time. In 2006, IGN listed "The Crepes of Wrath" as the best episode of the first season, saying it "features a strong central storyline, with Bart being shipped off to France as an exchange student and being forced to work for two unscrupulous winemakers that mix antifreeze in their wine." The episode's reference to *Le Ballon Rouge* was named the third greatest film reference in the history of the show by Nathan Dittum of Total Film.

In *Planet Simpson*, author Chris Turner notes that many of the episode's French characters and settings are derived largely from American stereotypes of France, writing "[Caesar and Ugolin] are perfect embodiments of the stereotypical Frenchman so loathed in the United States." The episode has become study material for sociology courses at University of California Berkeley, where it is used to "examine issues of the production and reception of cultural objects, in this case, a satirical cartoon show", and to figure out what it is "trying to tell audiences about aspects primarily of American society, and, to a lesser extent, about other societies."