

= El Viaje Misterioso de Nuestro Jomer (The Mysterious Voyage of Homer) =

" El Viaje Misterioso de Nuestro Jomer (The Mysterious Voyage of Homer) " , (Spanish pronunciation : [el ˈβja.xe misteˈʝoso de ˈnwe.s.t̪o ˈxome?]) also known as The Mysterious Voyage of Our Homer , is the ninth episode of the eighth season of The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 5 , 1997 . In the episode , Homer eats several Guatemalan insanity peppers and hallucinates , causing him to go on a mysterious voyage . Following this , he questions his relationship with Marge and goes on a journey to find his soulmate .

" El Viaje Misterioso de Nuestro Jomer (The Mysterious Voyage of Homer) " was written by Ken Keeler and directed by Jim Reardon . The episode explores themes of marriage , community and alcohol use . Homer 's voyage features surreal animation to depict the elaborate hallucination . The episode guest stars Johnny Cash as the " Space Coyote " .

This episode was loosely adapted as the plot of the Simpsons level pack for the video game Lego Dimensions .

= = Plot = =

After a series of distractions from Marge , Homer suddenly smells out the annual chili cook @-@ off . Marge admits that she was trying to keep Homer from attending because of his drunken antics at the previous year 's event , when he jumped into a cotton candy machine , claiming he was a " puffy pink cloud " , so she allows Homer to go , on the condition that he does not drink any beer . At the cook @-@ off , Homer demonstrates an extraordinary ability to withstand hot foods , until he fails against Chief Wiggum 's chili which burns his tongue . Sobbing about his humiliation , he drinks several cups of water .

After nearly accidentally drinking melted candle wax , Homer decides to coat his mouth with wax , enabling him to eat several of the peppers . The peppers bring on a hallucination in which Homer is trapped in a bizarre fantasy world . He encounters a snake , a butterfly and a tortoise , and he accidentally destroys the sun . He finally arrives at a large Mayan pyramid and meets his spirit guide in the form of a coyote . The coyote advises Homer to find his soulmate , and questions Homer 's assumption that he has already found her in Marge . Meanwhile , Marge hears of Homer 's strange behavior and , believing he has broken his promise , drives home .

The next day , Homer regains his senses while lying in a golf course sand trap . He rationalizes his dream , comparing the desert he wandered in to the sand trap , the Mayan pyramid with a pro shop , and the talking coyote with a passing talking dog . After returning home , he finds Marge angry with him for his embarrassing behavior at the cook @-@ off . This leads to Homer making note of their fundamental personality differences , causing him to question if Marge is truly his soulmate , and he leaves . Filled with doubt , he searches elsewhere for a soulmate , yet fails in each instance .

Eventually he becomes convinced that a lighthouse keeper might be his soulmate , since they would both be theoretically lonely individuals ; instead he finds the lighthouse is operated by a machine , EARL (Electronic Automatic Robotic Lighthouse) . Seeing an approaching ship , Homer destroys the lighthouse 's light in hopes that it will cause the boat to come closer and the people inside will befriend him . An apologetic Marge arrives , having known exactly where Homer would go , and the pair realize that they really are soulmates . Marge quickly fixes the lighthouse so that the ship will not run into them , but it runs aground nearby , spilling its precious cargo of hot pants . The citizens of Springfield happily retrieve the pants while Marge and Homer embrace .

= = Production = =

The episode was pitched as early as the third season by George Meyer , who was interested in an episode based on the books of Carlos Castaneda . Meyer had wanted to have an episode featuring a mystical voyage that was not induced by drugs , and so he decided to use " really hot " chili peppers instead . The staff , except for Matt Groening , felt it was too odd for the show at that point .

Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein resurrected the story , and decided to use it for season eight .

Most of the hallucination sequence was animated completely by David Silverman . Silverman did not want the risk of sending it to South Korea , as he wanted it to look exactly as he had imagined it , including rendered backgrounds to give a soft mystical feel to the scene . The coyote was intentionally drawn in a boxier way so that it looked " other @-@ worldly " and unlike the other characters . During Homer 's voyage , the clouds in one shot are live @-@ action footage , and 3D computer animation was used for the giant butterfly . During the same hallucination , Ned Flanders ' line was treated on a Mac computer so that it increased and decreased pitch . The Fox censors sent a note to the writers , questioning Homer coating his mouth with hot wax . The note read : " To discourage imitation by young and foolish viewers , when Homer begins to pour hot wax into his mouth , please have him scream in pain so kids will understand that doing this would actually burn their mouths . " The scream was not added ; however , they did add dialog from Ralph Wiggum , questioning Homer on his action . The director also created a " wax @-@ chart " for Homer for the animators to follow during the sequence when Homer 's mouth is coated with candle @-@ wax .

Homer waking up on a golf course was a reference to something that happened to a friend of the producers , who blacked out , waking up on a golf course in a different town and state . He had to buy a map from 7 @-@ Eleven in order to find out where he was . He then had to walk several miles in order to get back to his friend 's house , which was the last place he remembered being the night before .

= = = Casting = = =

Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan were the writers ' top two choices to play the coyote ; the writers had wanted to use one of The Highwaymen as the voice of the spirit guide . Bob Dylan had turned the show down many times , having previously been offered a role in season seven 's " Homerpalooza " . Johnny Cash was offered the role , which he accepted . Matt Groening described Cash 's appearance as " one of the greatest coups the show has ever had . "

= = Cultural references = =

The main plot of the episode is based on the works of Carlos Castaneda , with some of the Native American imagery being similar to that used in the film Dances with Wolves . The lighthouse keeper actually being a computer is a reference to the episode of The Twilight Zone " The Old Man in the Cave " , in which a man in a cave turns out to be a computer . The main theme from The Good , the Bad and the Ugly is used during the scenes when Homer walks into the chili festival , and the song " At Seventeen " by Janis Ian plays in the background as Homer walks through the town of Springfield looking for his soul @-@ mate after he wakes up from his vision . The scene at the end of Homer 's hallucination , when the train is heading towards him , is a reference to the opening titles of Soul Train . Homer 's record collection features albums by Jim Nabors , Glen Campbell and The Doodletown Pipers .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " El Viaje Misterioso de Nuestro Jomer (The Mysterious Voyage of Homer) " finished 34th in ratings for the week of December 30 , 1996 - January 5 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 0 , equivalent to approximately 8 @. @ 7 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , beating Millennium .

The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , said : " Homer 's chili @-@ induced trip is brilliant , complete with the surreal tortoise and Indian spirit guide . " The episode was placed eighth on AskMen.com 's " Top 10 : Simpsons Episodes " list , and in his book Planet Simpson , Chris Turner named the episode as being one of his five favorites , although he found the ending too sentimental . In 2011 , Keith Plocek of LA Weekly 's Squid Ink blog listed " El Viaje Misterioso de Nuestro Jomer

" as the best episode of the show with a food theme . IGN ranked Johnny Cash 's performance as the 14th @-@ best guest appearance in the show 's history , while Cash also appeared on AOL 's list of their favorite 25 Simpsons guest stars , and on The Times ' Simon Crerar 's list of the 33 funniest cameos in the history of the show . Andrew Martin of Prefix Mag named Johnny Cash his third @-@ favorite musical guest on The Simpsons out of a list of ten . Fred Topel of Crave Online named it the best episode of the entire series .