

The Christmas Pickle

by
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The Christmas Pickle

Dedicated to Lily Deitz

It was 14 days and a pickle away from Christmas.

Counting down the days was never really a problem.

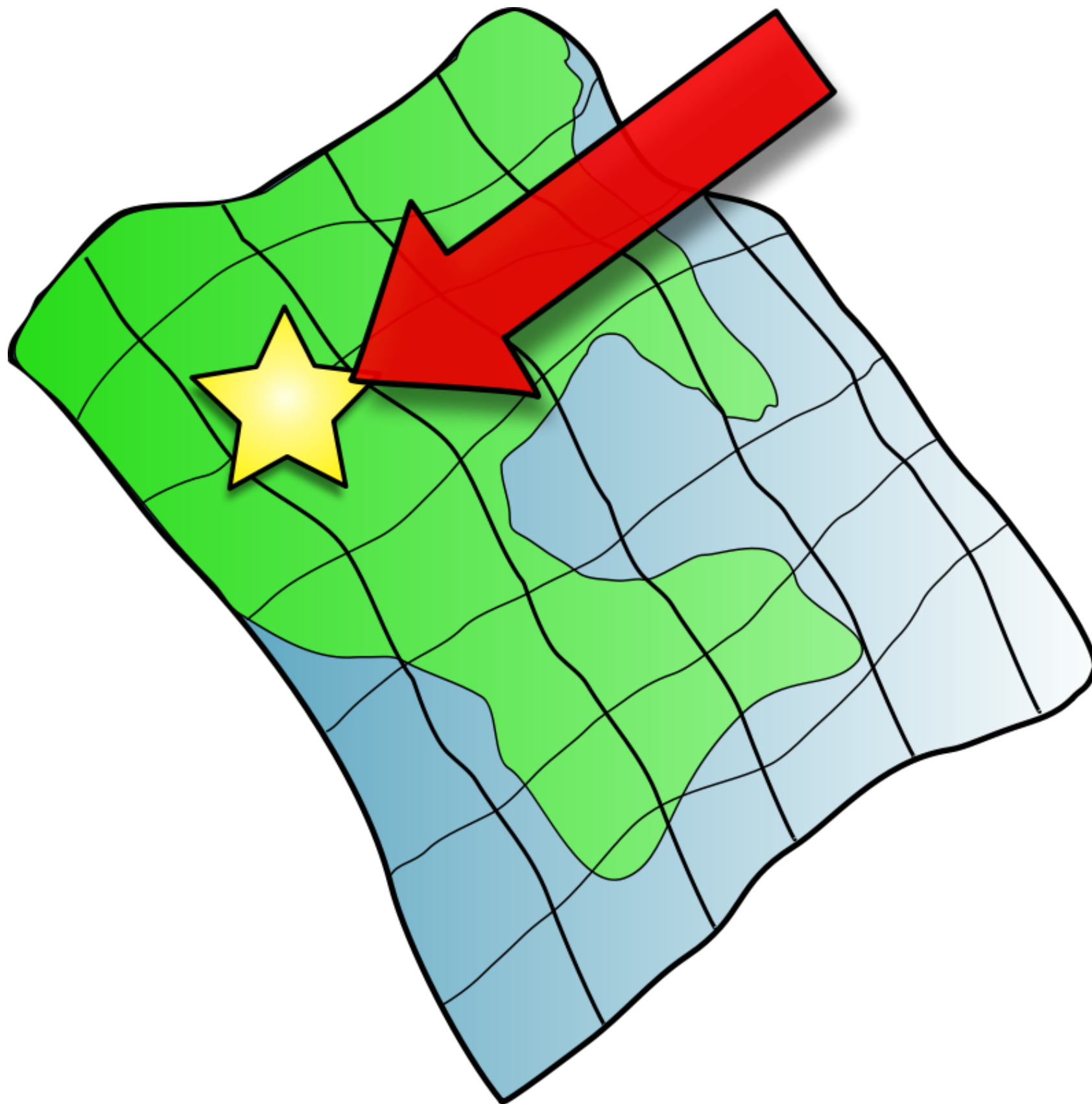
Until this year.

Getting a Christmas pickle - THE Christmas Pickle - often proved to be challenging. But, the yearly search for the perfectly proper pickle to propel Santa's packs and sacks across a skyway of tracks was not going well at all.

It was a pickle, indeed. A Christmas pickle.

I'm sure you've heard the expression "in a pickle" right? It means in a difficult position. The expression comes from the Dutch phrase "in de pekel zitten" or "sit in the pickle" which derives from the process of stewing vegetables in brine in order to make pickles.

The tradition of the Christmas pickle went back centuries, at least in the country of Inloddagobahda (pronounced In-Lód-ah-go-báh-da), a small entity located just north of Belgium and south of Netherlands where Kerzelseweg meets Galderseweg.



The
underground
village of
Inloddagobahda

It's usually almost impossible for outsiders to find because Inloddagobahda is also located approximately 50 meters underground. You enter the country by walking down a secret stairway located in the Café Moske in Kerzelseweg, Galder, Netherlands. Why is Inloddagobahda underground? Because it couldn't afford to pay for a standing army or any kind of military defense whatsoever. Humans defend themselves by "Fight or Flight." In this case, the city fathers decided to act like an ostrich and stick their heads in the ground. They chose flight - and it worked well for them.

Being underground does have other advantages, too. For instance, no one ever had to dig a hole. Since everyone is already situated at the bottom (so to speak), they just have to burrow upwards. The only hole that the town even has a written record of was dug in 1832 by a man who spent far more than he earned.

His accountant summarily wrote him a note to inform the lad that he had "dug himself into a hole." Other than that, no other holes are on record. At least whole holes.



A home in the village of
Inloddagobahda.

A whole hole would be the complete hole, which in most cases would be circular and empty as you went downward. There is such a thing as a half hole but they are used very seldom since most people who dig holes want a complete one and frown on only a half one.

So, there it is.

Now, the issue of The Christmas Pickle is another matter, indeed. Never before had the CP (as some town folk called it) been so elusive. Usually, it was available, ready, and as green and good as a pickle should be. Except for this year. The Christmas Pickle was not to be found anywhere. Everyone had been questioned, several times. But, there was not a clue as to the whereabouts of the Christmas Pickle.

The ACLU considered filing suit.

The NCAA checked every basketball net.

The FDIC came right out and stated there was no insurance to cover such a loss.

And the USPS said the CP was MIA.

You probably are wondering why was the Christmas Pickle so important? Well, I'll tell you: without THE Pickle Santa's sleigh just couldn't fly. Sure, you've heard plenty of stories about Rudolph and his red nose guiding Santa's sleigh. And yes, the reindeer as a team have a certain ability to fly and carry the weight of all the presents that are packed in the sled.

But, the pickle was the "spark plug" which started this whole process. Without the Christmas Pickle, Santa's sled was dead in the shed. It was the power of the pickle that kept the sled from being fickle. Santa's sleigh was old, thousands of years old and in order to fly thousands of miles once-a-year, it required something from the Earth that was fresh and organic.

They had tried a melon, but it left Santa yellin'.

They had tried a radish, but it left Santa maddish,

They had tried a potato, but it made Santa Late-o.

Nothing worked except the pickle and mostly because the special slot on the sleigh where the pickle was placed, was only as big as the perfect Christmas Pickle should be. The next question you'll probably ask is, "Why a Pickle?" Well, the Pickle was a reminder to Santa that no matter how famous and beloved he might become bringing toys to children around the world, he didn't really control that. He couldn't do anything without the Pickle.

The Pickle was a duly appointed representative of Nature. The Pickle is powerful. It can feed people before it's a pickle as cucumbers, provide pickles when it's a pickle for hamburgers, and unlock the special properties of the most wonderful sleigh in the world when it's The Christmas Pickle.

Santa and a
reindeer waiting
for the Christmas
Pickle



Usually, the Pickle presented itself at the proper time with appropriate pizzazz. One day a resident of Inloddagobahda would be working out in their garden when there it would be, in all its glory, just glistening in the sun and waiting to be admired.

Inloddagobahdans had a keen sense for the right Pickle. It's almost as if the Pickle picked the person and not the other way around. It's hard to know exactly how the process unfolded.

Did the Pickle roll from field to field until it felt comfortable? Was there a Pickle valet for escorting the Pickle from garden to garden? Did the Pickle know even when it was a seed it was destined to grow in a particular row of plants?

We don't know. We also do not know why only one Pickle ever presented itself each year. There were never ten or eight or five or three. Only one.

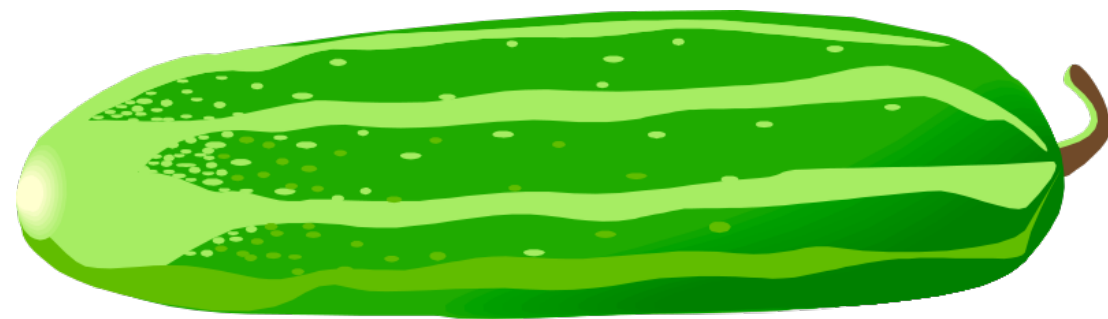
That's why so much attention was placed on finding out where the Pickle was each year.

One certainly did not want to miss it and there was a lot of pressure from the Claus household to find it in plenty of time for Christmas Eve.

Usually by now the Christmas Pickle had been discovered and the town was reveling in its presence. There was usually a Pickle Parade and the townsfolk built floats, put on band uniforms, created banners, and marched or watched depending on what you were able to do or not. Unlike a traditional holiday parade where Santa brings up the rear and is the star, the Pickle Parade was all about that lovely, large gherkin. The Inloddagobahdanians cheered and clapped while the parade proudly made its way through the village, culminating with the Pickle, itself, sitting in a holiday throw bedecked with a Santa hat and a bright red scarf.

Since the Christmas Pickle had some mysterious qualities it was easy for the pickle to grow larger or smaller on a whim. It grew larger for the parade but maintained a much smaller physique when it came time to be inserted into the Official Pickle Place on the dashboard of Santa's Sleigh.

Behold, the magic of the Pickle.





A concerned Santa Claus,
waiting for The Christmas Pickle
to be found.

But, there had been no Pickle Parade this year. There was only Pickle panic. Finally, the Mayor of Inloddagobahda declared that every resident should immediately put on their pickle-hunting clothing - blaze green for safety - and send out rescue parties to scour the countryside. The search began and for two days the citizens of Inloddagobahda looked high and low, up and down, and even either and neither. On the second day, the desperation grew so much, Santa even instructed his elves to stop all work on toys and join in the hunt. Certainly, without the pickle there could be no Christmas. It was a Christmas Pickle, indeed.

Then one day as the last elf, Lily, left Santa's workshop to join the hunt, she went to close the door which was usually propped open to let in the fresh air. When she bent down to remove the doorstop, she thought it peculiar that the doorstop was green. As she pulled it out from underneath the door she realized it was no doorstop at all. It was a gherkin! But, not just any pickled cucumber. This green garnish had a glow about it. And wiggled! It wiggled right there in Lily's hand and then jumped off her palm as if it was a trampoline. It began to jump nervously on the workshop floor.

"This was no ordinary gherkin. It couldn't be! Lily began to run after it but the jumpin' gherkin was quite mischievous and playful. Lily would dive for it, but continued to miss until finally, after several tries, she caught it in her hands.

"Got you!" she exclaimed. "Are you the Christmas Pickle? And why were you under our door?"

"I was hiding!" exclaimed the frightened pickle.

"But, why? Don't you know everyone is looking for you? We can't proceed with Christmas without you!" said Lily.



Lily, the elf

"I was in the patch just basking in the sunshine when the cucumber next to me said our fate was going to end badly," replied the Christmas Pickle. "He said when we were big enough the farmer would come, pull us off our vine, and march us off to market or sell us to a pickle plant. Either way, it would not end well."

"It's not like that at all," said Lily, the Elf. "First of all you are special and you have a destiny. Without you, Santa's sleigh just will not run properly. You were born to be a Christmas Pickle."

"Does everyone have a destiny?" asked the panicky pickle..

"I'm pretty certain they do," assured Lily. "That's how Inloddagobahda was created. It was part of a bigger plan. As for your friends back in the cucumber patch, well, they have a fate, too. They are truly respected vegetables and will be honored by Inloddagobahdans as food. Inloddagobahdans are generally good. So, when they eat food, the food become part of that goodness. Inloddagobahdans take many of the cucumbers, put them in a new home called a "jar," then add a variety of nice smelling substances and water. Over time the cucumbers slowly mature into pickles. Often, they will sit in their jar homes for years and just look out the windows all day long enjoying their surroundings. Then, one day they are welcomed as food

"What about you?" wondered the young cuke. "What's your destiny?"

"Me?" replied Lily.

She thought about it for a moment then answered.

"Part of my destiny was to find you!" she said.

They both smiled and enjoyed the wonderful feeling of being an important part of a world where being found is better than being lost.

"I guess I was worried for no reason," said the Christmas Pickle.

With that, Lily extended her small hand and the Christmas Pickle sprung into her palm.

"I am ready to fulfill my destiny!" shouted the Christmas Pickle.

Lily the Elf carefully closed her fingers around the green cucumber and took off running into the village of Inloddagobahda. When she reached the center, she began to exclaim with joy.

"The Christmas Pickle is here!" shouted Lily. "It was a misunderstanding but there is nothing to worry about now! Santa's Sled can turn on and travel around the world because his sled will now be completely operational!"

The excitement quickly spread throughout the village as relieved and joyful Inloddagobahdans buzzed with the news that the Christmas Pickle had not only been found, but was making an appearance in town. Normally, nobody would even be able to catch a glimpse of him until Christmas Eve.

"This is amazing! Everyone loves me!" he said to his escort, Lily. "If only I had known this before!"

"I'm very proud of you," replied Lily. "You should always have faith in who you are."

And in keeping with their responsibility and pleasure, the village of Inloddagobahda provided Santa Claus with Christmas Pickles for many years forward.

Even today, the story of this particular Christmas Pickle circulates and percolates through daily life throughout the village.

You can often hear a villager greet a neighbor by asking, "How are you?"

To which a common reply is, "I am fine, thank you, and it's a good day to be who I am."

The end.



About the author

Corey Deitz is a radio personality, writer, and author. For more information on his other books, visit www.CoreyDeitz.com.

