

## Invasion of the Salad Toad

By Kristin Van Alstine

May 1, 2009

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Disclaimer: This photo is a re-creation of actual events. No toads were harmed during the production of this blog. The following account is based on a true story. Yes!!! It's true- this actually did happen. (Check out the news article and photo here.) This thing that some if not most people would find disgusting and offensive, I actually (perhaps not too surprising to you) find amusing and incredible. A toad, a native of Portugal, was somehow packaged inside a bag of pre-cut salad mix and sold to a woman at a grocery store in the U.K. It was found alive and well, seemingly unharmed (if not a bit chilled), and not only that, it was discovered to be a rare Natterjack toad that is almost unheard of in that region.

My first, and most important, question is this: Why hasn't this ever happened to me??? Since the reading of this news story, I've found myself lingering in the produce section of the grocery store, paused motionless, awaiting a mere glimpse of something wonderful, something extraordinary – the uncommon but oft-coveted Salad Toad! What an awesome sight to behold; the majestic, glistening toad, inadvertently captured and accidentally packaged, awaiting some unsuspecting shopper.

What must this person's life have been like prior to this momentous occasion? I'd like to take a moment to focus on imagining their life that day, B.T. (Before Toad):

A trip to the store was in order, as the daily essentials had run low at home. Perhaps a list was made: bread, milk, eggs ... salad? They took a trip to the store, an uneventful and routine drive. They arrived at their local supermarket, nothing seeming to be out of the ordinary. Alas, the greenery and fruit lay out before them as they approached the all-too-familiar produce department. After selecting various fruit and veggies, they chose the best-looking, most "lively" salad mix, perhaps even searching out the bag with the latest expiration date. After perusing the other aisles and crossing everything off their list, they finished at the check-out and exited the store. Upon returning home, they began the mundane chore of unloading their groceries from the car and bringing them inside. Little did they know ... in a few brief moments ... life would never be quite the same ...

You can probably imagine the resulting shock and chaos that followed, amid shrieks of fright and disgust. Who would expect such a creature to be hiding amidst the leaves of lettuce? I'm sure that the convenience of pre-washed and cut greens would no longer seem so appealing to this poor unfortunate victim of Bufo food intrusion.

My second question is this: How did this happen??? How did a toad get through the many procedures of collecting, washing, chopping, packaging and who knows what other processes to end up on a supermarket shelf? I would love to know the answer to that question. Aside from that, perhaps this is a more common occurrence than I am aware of. Maybe these types of things have happened to other animal lovers who see the experience as more like finding a prize inside a Cracker Jack box. They simply keep it to themselves and don't say anything at all so we never hear about it. Or, with those who do report the finding of bumpy little hitchhikers, it's probably kept quiet by whatever business it came from to avoid a harmed reputation. They just go unreported to the press and the person who discovered it is "silenced" in some way. I call these silencers of the truth the "salad toad oppressors."

So if salad toads are secretly on the rise, what's next? Pasta toads? Sandwich toads? One can dream ... If these things are actually happening, then maybe my chances of finding such a prize are better than I think!

-The Toad Talker

[Back to Blogs>>](#)