

1984

Pure Maine Maple Syrup: Naturally Good

Maine Bureau of Agricultural Marketing

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalmaine.com/food_marketing

Recommended Citation

Maine Bureau of Agricultural Marketing, "Pure Maine Maple Syrup: Naturally Good" (1984). *Agricultural and Seafood Marketing and Cook Books*. 3.
https://digitalmaine.com/food_marketing/3

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Economic and Community Development at Digital Maine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Agricultural and Seafood Marketing and Cook Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Maine. For more information, please contact statedocs@maine.gov.

degree oven for about 10 minutes, until edges are well browned, then cool on wire racks. Centers will remain slightly cakey, edges will crisp as they cool. Makes about 3 dozen.

MAPLE CREAM CHEESE SPREAD

This is good on just about any bread, including bagels, and can also be used as an icing. It's particularly nice with carrot cake.
1/2 cup Maine maple syrup—the dark kind is fine
6 ounces cream cheese

Let the cheese soften at room temperature. Put the syrup in a small pan and simmer, stirring occasionally, over medium-low heat, until it is thickened to the texture of heavy honey—about 235 degrees on a candy thermometer. Let it cool, stirring once or twice, then beat the sticky mess into the creamcheese. You must reduce the syrup before combining it with the cheese or the mixture will curdle and separate. Store refrigerated, tightly covered and it will keep a long time—if it lasts.

CREAMY MAPLE CASHEW BARK

1½ cups Maine maple syrup
1½ cups cashew nuts, lightly toasted (do not use salted nuts)
2 or 3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon baking soda

Lightly butter a baking sheet and set it aside. Combine the maple syrup and nuts in a large, heavy pan and slowly bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring as little as possible, until the mixture reads 270 degrees on a candy thermometer. Stir in the butter and remove pan from the heat. Quickly stir in the soda, which will make the mixture foam. Pour it at once onto the prepared sheet and use the back of the spoon to spread the candy as thin as you can get it. Allow to cool, then break into pieces and store in an airtight tin.

SUGAR ON SNOW (LEATHER APRONS)

In the old days, when syrup making was a community affair, children and adults alike enjoyed the taffy-like candy made by pouring hot syrup onto well-packed snow. This first treat of the maple season should always be accompanied by plain donuts and sour pickles, which provide

a necessary contrast to the sweetness of the maple.

Heat the desired amount of syrup to 22 degrees above the boiling point of water. Without stirring, pour immediately to form a thin coating onto packed snow or shaved ice. Wind the taffy onto forks for eating—it's too soft to pick up. A quart of syrup is sufficient for 12 to 16 people, depending on how many of them are under 10.

RECIPES FROM A MODERN PIONEER

The maple treats below come from The Maple Sugar Book, written by Maine's famous "Good Life" philosophers, Helen and Scott Nearing. (Reprinted with Mrs. Nearing's permission)

MAPLE APPLE SAUCE

One cup Maine maple sugar or syrup, with half a cup of water, should be brought to a rolling boil in a deep pan. Then fill pan with unpeeled sections of apples. Stir up until all pieces are coated with syrup. Cook only long enough to tenderize apples. The slices remain unbroken and glazed.

MAPLE MOUSSE

Make a usual custard, using 1 cup maple syrup, ⅓ cup milk and the yolks of 4 eggs. Whip 1 pint of cream and thoroughly mix with the custard. Place in refrigerator until proper consistency.

MAPLE GINGERBREAD

Mix 1 cup maple syrup with 3 tablespoons shortening and 1 teaspoon ginger. Sift and stir in sufficient flour to make the mixture stiff as can be. Then add 1 cup boiling water to which has been added 1 teaspoon soda. Beat well and bake in a quick oven.



For information on sources of pure maple syrup and other quality Maine products, please contact:

**Bureau of Agricultural Marketing
State House Station #28
Augusta, Maine 04333
(207) 289-3491**

Pure Maine Maple Syrup



Naturally Good

A NATURAL TREAT

Pure Maine maple syrup with a hint of the great north woods in it, has been brightening the flavor of fine downeast food since long before the colonists arrived. Now, hundreds of years later, it's still the same great natural product. State controls assure quality, and the degree of sweetness is fixed by law, but the uniquely delicious taste still varies, as it always has. Sometimes the syrup is dark and rich, sometimes pale gold and delicate. It all depends on the soil and terrain, the wind and the weather. You could almost say it's like wine.

Like winemakers, Maine's maple syrup producers take a lot of personal pride in their product and they have been doing so for a very long time. The art of making sugar and syrup from the sap of the maple tree (**acer saccharum**) was developed by the Native Americans of the Northeast. For them it was the all-purpose seasoning, used as we might use salt. It was also one of their staple foods, a primary source of nourishment in the early spring season, so valuable (and portable) it was often used as money. Important festivals celebrated the sugar harvest and there was much merriment and feasting when the last elm bark bucket had been emptied and a year's supply of sugar safely made. European settlers were quick to learn about this tasty natural resource, and they brought something very important to trade for the Indian's knowledge—Iron Kettles. Until the Europeans arrived, there were no fireproof vessels in Eastern North America. The Indians boiled the syrup by dropping red-hot stones into thick wooden containers full of sap.

Iron kettles made the work of sugar boiling much easier (and the product a lot cleaner). They bubbled steadily, every spring, throughout the early centuries of our history, providing the self-sufficient New England farmers with an ample supply of home-grown sweetness. It was much cheaper and easier to get than imported cane sugar. And cane sugar, furthermore, was part of the chain of slavery. Maple sugar, being made by free men, was better suited to the Yankee temperament.

Of course, appreciation for maple sugar went way beyond New England. Thomas Jefferson, our most agriculturally-minded president, tried several times to establish a “sugar bush” at Monticello. And there were even a few attempts to start a maple industry in Europe. They all failed. Oh, the trees grew all right, but they yielded no sweetness. The sugar in maple sap only appears where warm, sunny days and below-freezing nights follow each other for days on end, as they do in Maine's long, slow spring.

HOW IT'S DONE

From the time the first crow flies, usually in late February, to sometime in mid-April, the sparkling clear “sweetwater” of the Indians flows. In a good year, one large tree may pour out as much as 60 gallons of

sap, without suffering any injury. It seems like a lot, until you realize that the sap will be reduced to about one and a half gallons of syrup. Once it flows from the tree, the sap must be processed within a few hours or it will spoil, so syrup makers work 'round the clock, once the “spring run” has started.

Much of the sap is still gathered the old-fashioned way, in buckets hung from the trees, and boiled down to syrup over wood fires. Some of the larger producers have adopted labor-saving modern technology, however. They gather the sap with plastic tubing strung all the way from the trees to the “sugar house.” From holding tanks which may hold as much as a thousand gallons, the freshly-collected sap, usually about 3 percent sugar, is fed continuously into the evaporator. There it is kept constantly boiling, throwing off dense clouds of steam as it becomes more and more concentrated. When the syrup reaches a temperature of 7 degrees above the boiling point of water, the syrup maker knows the sugar-density is just right. Immediately, the finished syrup is filtered to remove particles of “sugar sand.” These, though harmless, would turn the syrup cloudy. Once properly clear, the finished syrup is packed in sterilized containers and sealed, ready to be distributed and enjoyed around the world.

ENJOYING MAPLE SYRUP

It's great on pancakes, needless to say, also waffles and french toast and biscuits and muffins and oatmeal and yogurt and vanilla ice cream. Use it to accent citrus fruits—especially grapefruit—and to enhance apples and pears and grapes and of course blueberries. Maple syrup is great for glazing a ham, indeed any roast pork, or for giving a touch of additional sweetness to root vegetables, like carrots and beets and turnips. Corn fritters with maple syrup are a classic favorite, and the **most** traditional baked beans are sweetened with maple instead of molasses. Try Maine maple syrup in tea, or your favorite milk drink . . . Wherever you need just a hint of special sweetness— why not make it maple?

STORING MAPLE SYRUP

Pure Maine maple syrup contains no preservatives and should be refrigerated or kept in a cool dry place after the seal is broken. A large quantity can be divided into smaller containers and frozen. Or it may be heated to 180 degrees and canned in sterilized jars. Process pints in boiling water for 10 minutes.

If syrup ferments, it can be restored to full flavor by bringing it just to the boil, without stirring. Let it simmer for 2 or 3 minutes, then turn off the heat and let it cool to room temperature. Skim all matter that rises to the surface, boil briefly once more and store as above.

RECIPES

MAPLE • MUSTARD BARBEQUE SAUCE

This is a spicy, sweet and sour basting sauce for grilled chicken, pork chops or spare ribs. Recipe makes about three-fourths cup, just enough for 4 servings. It can be doubled, if necessary.

- 2 tablespoons Dijon Style prepared mustard or other strong mustard
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, crushed through a press
- 1 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed
- 1/3 cup Maine maple syrup
- 1/3 cup peanut oil or other bland oil

Whisk together all ingredients in the order listed.

MAPLE • MUSTARD GLAZE FOR HAM OR ROAST PORK

Follow the recipe above, but omit the oil and add 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind.

DOWNEAST COMPANY COLESLAW

For 6 to 8 servings:

- 7 cups finely shredded cabbage—about half a 2 pound head
- 2 large tart apples, peeled, cored and shredded
- 1 small green pepper, chopped fine

Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon EACH powdered mustard, salt and pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 3 or 4 tablespoons Maine maple syrup
- 1/2 cup whole milk yogurt

In the bottom of a large bowl, combine the dressing ingredients in the order listed, using a wire whip to blend the mixture thoroughly. Stir in the vegetables, making sure they are evenly combined with each other and with the dressing. Cover tightly and refrigerate for at least a couple of hours, so the flavor of the dressing has time to penetrate.

OLD FASHIONED BAKED BEANS

For 8 to 10 servings:

- 6 cups dried beans (yellow eye or other Maine favorite) picked over
- 3/4 to 1 pound lean salt pork or slab bacon, on the rind
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1/3 cup Maine maple syrup
- 1 medium-sized onion, peeled and stuck with 2 whole cloves

Cover beans with boiling water, soak 1 hour, then drain. (This will remove some gas-causing compounds). Cover beans with cold water, bring to a slow boil and cook until skins split when the beans are blown on. Drain, saving liquid. Drop the meat into a pan of boiling water, turn off heat and let sit 5 or 10 minutes to remove excess salt. Drain and cut in half.

Put half of the meat, rind down, on the bottom of your beanpot. Combine 1 cup of bean-liquid with the mustard, syrup and pepper, then mix it into the parboiled beans. Transfer this to the beanpot and bury the onion right in the middle. Pour in just enough additional bean-liquid or water to barely show through the top layer of beans. Cap with the remaining meat, set rind side out. Cover and bake 6 to 8 hours in a very slow (250 degree) oven, adding boiling water if necessary to keep the beans from drying out. Uncover for the last hour so the top can get brown and crisp.

CRISP EDGED MAPLE OATMEAL COOKIES

- 6 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup Maine maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 1 egg
- 1 cup minus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- pinch of allspice
- 1/2 cup rolled oats (not instant)

Sift or thoroughly stir together the flour, salt, soda and allspice. Cream the butter, then beat in the syrup, lemon rind and egg. Stir in the dry ingredients, then the oatmeal. Drop by teaspoons on a lightly buttered baking sheet and spread flat with a knifeblade. Bake in a preheated 350