



## MAPLE CREAM DESSERT

### Contributed by Noreen

1 cup New Brunswick maple syrup  
1 1/2 envelopes gelatin 1/4 cup water  
1 pint whipping cream

Dissolve the gelatin in water and soak. Melt over hot water and combine with the maple syrup. Cool. Whip the cream. When the maple mixture becomes as thick as egg whites, whip in small bowl of mixer. Fold into whipped cream. Put in a mold which has been rinsed with very cold water and sprinkled with sugar. Chill for 4 hours. Serve to 8 to 10 people.



## MAPLE SYRUP

### Thousand-Year-Old Recipe

Products of the sugar and black maple hardwood trees were well known to First Nations people of the Lawrence and Great Lakes areas before Europeans arrived. Early European venturers were delighted with the delicious, fragrant sweetness of maple syrup and sugar - for, until West Indian plantations made cane sugar widely available, they had mostly known only honey. In 1663 the English chemist, Robert Boyle, described sap collection as recorded in the accounts of Massachusetts settlers and, in 1673, French priests in New France similarly sent reports back home.



**Demonstrating a maple sugar bush and springtime sap gathering, this colourful lithograph, take from Thomas Conant's Upper Canada Sketches in the late 19th century, illustrates natives with local settlers from the back country gathering and preparing sap for maple sugar. Today the province of Quebec supplies more than 50 percent of the world's supply of maple sugar [C.J. Humber Collection]**

The people of the First Nations had an age-old collecting technique. As the warming days of early spring brought sap rising in the maple woods, they cut a diagonal slash in each lower trunk and inserted a hollow reed through which the sap dripped into a small bark container. These were subsequently taken to bigger bark or log containers where fire-heated stones were dropped into them until the sap had boiled down to a dark, sweet syrup often referred to as "sweet water," especially when used in the cooking of venison. Further boiling produced maple sugar. European settlers basically kept to this pattern, merely replacing bark vessels with either wood or metal pails and large cast-iron kettles hung by chains over boiling fires.

Indeed, for many subsequent generations throughout both French and English Canada, the "maple moon" month or the "sugaring off" period would remain a special occasion on the country calendar. Then, in the melting days and freezing nights from March into April (depending on local weather), rural families would gather at their shanties in the sugar bush to collect and boil the sap - and to make maple taffy or maple candy for young and old alike by pouring syrup with the consistency of melted wax out onto a clean, white snow bank.



**This 18th century engraving, one of the earliest known views depicting the making of maple sugar in Canada by aboriginals, is taken from *Moeurs des Sauvages Américains, compare'es aux moeurs des premier temps*, published in Paris in 1724 by P. Lafitau [Royal Ontario Museum]**

Only around the 1940s did methods change. A modernized maple syrup industry introduced networks of plastic pipes leading from the trees to a central evaporating plant. Despite this, market demands exceeded supply, and prices soared.

Today, especially in Southern Quebec and in eastern Ontario, maple syrup and maple sugar continue to add their flavour (literally) to a distinctive Canadian farm-and-bush industry.

