

4.8: Maple Syrup (ADD US)

Canada is responsible for 84% of the world's maple syrup production, with the United States being responsible for the remaining 16%. Maple syrup is made by boiling and evaporating the sap of the sugar maple tree. Because sap is only 2% or 3% sugar, it takes almost 40 liters of sap to make 1 liter of syrup. This makes maple syrup a very expensive sweetener. It is prized for its unique flavor and sweet aroma. Don't confuse maple-flavored pancake or table syrup with real maple syrup. Table syrup is made from inexpensive glucose or corn syrup, with added caramel coloring and maple flavoring.

Maple syrup in Canada has two categories:

1. Canada Grade A, which has four color/flavor classes
 - golden, delicate taste
 - amber, rich taste
 - dark, robust taste
 - very dark, strong taste
2. Canada Processing Grade, which has no color descriptors (any maple syrup that possesses minimal food quality defects but still meets all government regulatory standards for food quality and safety for human consumption)

This definition and grading system gives consumers more consistent and relevant information about the varieties, and helps them make informed choices when choosing maple syrup.

Darker maple syrups are better for baking as they have a more robust flavor. Using maple sugar is also a good way to impart flavor. Maple sugar is what remains after the sap of the sugar maple is boiled for longer than is needed to create maple syrup. Once almost all the water has been boiled off, all that is left is a solid sugar. It can be used to flavor some maple products and as an alternative to cane sugar.

For a video on maple syrup production, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFIj4pMYpTQ>

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