



KINGS LANDING

LEARN HOW TO MAKE CANDY ON THE SNOW

AND ABOUT NEW BRUNSWICK'S MAPLE HERITAGE!



ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

OBJECTIVES

- Learn how to make candy on the snow at home;
- Provide students with a brief history of maple sugar making in New Brunswick;
- Read and discuss an Indigenous story;
- Learn what artifacts are and how they help you to understand history.

GRADE LEVEL(S)

- This lesson is intended for students from Grade 4 to 9, but students of all ages may enjoy the activity.
- Please fully read this lesson and adapt it to the student's level.

MATERIALS & INGREDIENTS NEEDED

- Maple syrup
- Popsicle sticks
- Snow or blended ice
- Pan
- Candy thermometer
- Stove top

Do you like to put maple syrup on your pancakes and waffles? Have you ever used it in baking? Do you put maple syrup on things other people might find strange?

White, brown, and powdered sugar are what many people think of when they think of sugar. These sugars are all made from a plant called sugar cane. Sugar cane doesn't grow in New Brunswick. A long time ago, it was really expensive to ship this type of sugar to New Brunswick. Imagine all the food you wouldn't be able to enjoy without access to sugar. A lot of food relies on sweeteners to make it tasty, so locals made sugar from what was available: maple trees!

Back then, the coming of spring was marked by maple sugar-making. As soon as the sun began to melt the snow, the settlers would go into the woods and collect and boil sap from maple trees. They would set up camp near the biggest cluster of maple trees. This spot was called the sugar bush. Farmers would take as many people as they could muster into the sugar bush because the processing of transforming sap into sugar is very hard work!

The very last task in the sugar bush was an exciting one. Candy was made by dashing the thickest maple syrup on snow where it instantly hardened into candy. The settlers called this candy a "long-lick." Even though families worked so hard to get sugar everyone looked forward to this tasty treat as a reward for all their labour!

You'll learn more about New Brunswick's maple history later on, but for now, take a break and have an adult help you make your own candy on the snow.

ACTIVITY



INGREDIENTS & MATERIALS

- Maple syrup
- Clean snow
- Popsicle sticks
- Pan
- Candy thermometer
- Stove top

DIRECTIONS

1. Fill a pan with hard packed clean snow. Keep it cold.
2. Boil pure maple syrup until it reaches 235°F on a candy thermometer (when you drop a bit into cold water, it will form a soft ball).
3. Drizzle the syrup over the packed snow in strips about 5cm long.
4. Pick up the syrup by inserting a popsicle stick on one end and roll it up.
5. Allow it to cool for a moment, and then enjoy!



LESSON

SUGAR MAKING

Up until about a hundred years ago, each spring, families set up a camp near a stand of sugar maple trees to collect and process maple sap. They called this place a sugar bush. They collected the sap using birch-bark containers or wooden buckets.



A wooden spile and bucket being used to collect sap from a maple tree.

Have you seen sap before? It looks like water but tastes a little sweet. This is because it's made up of mostly water with a little bit of maple sugar. As the sap gets hot, the water turns into steam and floats away into the air. This is called evaporation. The more water that evaporates from the sap, the sweeter it is. The longer the sap is boiled, the less water it contains.

In the sugar bush, families hung three large iron pots over a fire to boil the sap. In the first pot, they boiled the sweet, watery sap until it thickened. They ladled the thick sap into the second pot where it simmered to a syrup consistency. They poured the syrup into crocks to be used just like the maple syrup you enjoy over pancakes.

Often, they would pour the syrup into a third pot to be boiled and stirred until all the water evaporated and all that was left was hard sugar. Have you ever had brown sugar that was hard as a rock? This happens because all the water has left it. That's what early maple sugar was like!



Boiled down maple syrup. It will be boiled into sugar which will then be placed in a mould, like the one Mr. Grant is showing above.

As you learned earlier, when Europeans first settled in New Brunswick, cane sugar was expensive and difficult to obtain. Settlers had little money to spend and often made maple sugar to use at home or for trade. When imported sugar became available for lower prices, fewer families harvested maple sap. Maple products eventually became luxury items.



A group visiting a sugar camp, circa 1915. Abraham Gesner wrote that "Picnic parties frequently visit the sugaries, where they are treated to a kind of candy called 'long-lick'." Image courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P94-17.



Men processing maple sugar in Albert County, 1923. In the centre is a galvanized steel sugar pan on a stirring table. Maple syrup was boiled down into maple sugar and padded into moulds. Image courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P616-270w.



[Click here to watch: Historica Canada: A family of Attikamek First Nations show a French Canadian family how to harvest the syrup of the sugar maple \(1710\).](#)

The history of maple syrup in New Brunswick goes back much, much further than when Europeans first arrived. Indigenous people were particularly fond of maple candy that they made in a “casoo.”* This was a cone-shaped birch bark mould in which they poured thick syrup to harden into candy. They stored the casoos and used the sugar as a sweetener for food and drink throughout the year.

Over 400 years ago, people from France settled around the mouth of the Saint John River. The Acadians, as they came to be called, traded with the Indigenous people and established a close relationship. They learned the benefits of tapping the maple trees and processed syrup and sugar.

About 350 years ago, a Swedish explorer, noted that during his travels to what is now New Brunswick, the Indigenous people gave him “more than anything else gifts of large pieces of sugar which stood us well in hand on our trip into the wilderness.” The Indigenous people held the sugar in very high esteem.

On the next page, you will find a first nations story about maple syrup changing a long, long time ago. Read this story and then discuss it. Do you think the story teaches an important lesson?

*David Myles, “Making of Maple Syrup and Sugar Has an Interesting History,” The Daily Gleaner, April 7, 1969.

GLUSKABE CHANGES MAPLE SYRUP (MKWAKBAGA)

Long ago, the Creator made and gave many gifts to man to help him during his life. The Creator made the lives of the Abenaki People very good, with plenty of food to gather, grow, and hunt. The Maple tree at that time was one of these very wonderful and special gifts from the Creator. The sap was as thick and sweet as honey. All you had to do was to break the end off a branch and the syrup would flow out.

In these days Gluskabe would go from native village to village to keep an eye on the People for the Creator. One day Gluskabe came to an abandoned village. The village was in disrepair, the fields were over-grown, and the fires had gone cold. He wondered what had happened to the People.

He looked around and around, until he heard a strange sound. As he went towards the sound he could tell that it was the sound of many people moaning. The moaning did not sound like people in pain but more like the sound of contentment. As he got closer he saw a large stand of beautiful maple trees. As he got closer still he saw that all the people were lying on their backs under the trees with the end of a branch broken off and dripping maple syrup into their mouths.



Illustration by Diane Therrien (Odanak)

The maple syrup had fattened them up so much and made them so lazy that they could barely move. Gluskabe told them to get up and go back to their village to re-kindle the fires and to repair the village. But the people did not listen. They told him that they were content to lie there and to enjoy the maple syrup.

When Gluskabe reported this to the Creator, it was decided that it was again time that man needed another lesson to understand the Creator's ways. The Creator instructed Gluskabe to fill the maple trees with water. So Gluskabe made a large bucket from birch bark and went to the river to get water. He added water and added more water until the sap was that like water. Some say he added a measure of water for each day between moons, or nearly 30 times what it was as thick syrup. After a while, the People began to get up because the sap was no longer so thick and sweet.

They asked Gluskabe "where has our sweet drink gone?" He told them that this is the way it will be from now on. Gluskabe told them that if they wanted the syrup again that they would have to work hard to get it. The sap would flow sweet only once a year before the new year of spring.

The People were shown that making syrup would take much work. Birch bark buckets would need to be made to collect the sap. Wood would need to be gathered to make fires to heat rocks, and the rocks would need to be put into the sap to boil the water out to make the thick sweet syrup that they once were so fond of. He also told them that they could get the sap for only a short time each year so that they would remember the error of their ways.

And so, it is still to this day, each spring the Abenaki people remember Gluskabe's lesson in honoring Creator's gifts and work hard to gather the maple syrup they love so much. Nialach!

Brian Chenevert wliwni

[Found on Facebook, the AIM N'dakinna Chapter page.](#)

ARTIFACTS

An object created by humans, like a tool or work of art, is called an artefact. Typically, when people use the term, they are referring to items with historical or cultural significance. Artefacts can be any object that was made, modified, used, or moved, by past human behavior. Exploring artefacts helps us better understand history! Here are some tools made by humans, or artefacts, to help turn maple sap into syrup and sugar.



A hand-carved wooden spile.

In order to tap a maple tree for sap, the maple producer drills a hole in the tree, inserts a spile and hangs a bucket from an attached hook. Indigenous people tapped trees by cutting a V-shaped gouge in the side of the tree. They inserted a piece of wood or bone into the cut to draw out the sap. In the 1700s, maple producers used a curved piece of cedar. By the mid-1800s, it was common to drill a hole and insert a wooden spile. This was followed by cast iron, galvanized and then plastic spiles.

Before the 1800s, imported sugar was expensive. People used it sparingly for medicine or to lightly sweeten foods. Lower income or isolated families used maple syrup because it was affordable and produced locally. As imported sugar became available, fewer people relied on maple syrup.



A sugar cone, a sugar bowl, a sugar mould, and sugar nips.

Merchants sold sugar in hard conical loaves, like the artefact mould in the last picture. The more refined the sugar, the smaller the loaf. Quality white sugar came in cones about 12.7 cm (5 inches) tall. People used hammers, chisels and sugar nips, like the artefact sugar nips in the last picture, to break up the loaf. They ground it with a mortar and pestle and sifted it to make powdered sugar.



An early birch bark container. Image courtesy of www.firstpeople.us.

Early sap containers included wooden troughs and birch-bark containers. These were placed on the ground beneath notches in sugar maple trees. Birch bark was light, so a rock would sometimes be placed inside the containers to give them weight. Wooden buckets replaced troughs and containers and, near the end of the 1800s, metal sap buckets became popular. In the 1960s, plastic tubing started to replace metal buckets. Today, sap is collected by tubes that carry it from the tree to a central container, or to a sugarhouse, often assisted by vacuum pumps.



A man using shoulder yokes to carry buckets of sap. Image courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P616-29w.



A guest tries on a shoulder yoke at Kings Landing's Sugar Bush event.

People used a shoulder yoke to carry buckets of sap by suspending evenly distributed loads from each end. They carried the yoke by balancing it on both shoulders. The carrier could transport heavy loads without injury if they stood and walked erect.

DISCUSSION

Do you have any artifacts at your house? Remember, an artifact is any object that was made, modified, used, or moved, by past human behavior. Look around the room you're in. Could any of the objects you see be considered artifacts?

Think of something you own that is very special to you. How does that object tell something about you, along with everything else in your room? Everything together tells about you because it is in context. You have selected certain things to have, and when they are all found together, they tell a story about you.

If you went into the Ingraham House at Kings Landing, you would find three bedrooms upstairs. One room has pink, floral wallpaper, a vanity table, a long mirror, a dresser, a bed, a portrait of a toddler dressed in adult clothing, books, and a spinning wheel. Even though you don't know the person who lived there, the artifacts in the room tell you a story about them. Who do you think this room belonged to? What were their interests?



This discussion is adapted from [Science Lesson Links](#).

SOURCES

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