

A Canadian Tradition

Maple syrup is a traditional Canadian topping for pancakes and French toast. Maple syrup comes from the sap of sugar maple trees. People collect the sap and boil off most of the water. As the water evaporates, the sap becomes thicker, darker, and very sweet.

The First Nations peoples of North America have many stories about maple syrup.

Story 1: Glooskap and the Lazy People

Long ago, the Creator made sugar maple trees. At that time, the sap of the trees was thick and sweet. All you had to do was cut the bark, and syrup dripped out.

One day, the great lord Glooskap walked into a village. To his surprise, it was empty! Glooskap found all the people of the village lying under sugar maple trees, drinking the sweet sap.

“Get up!” said Glooskap. “You need to work!” But everyone ignored him. So Glooskap got water from the river and poured it over the sugar maple trees. The water made the sap thin and not very sweet.

“You are too lazy,” Glooskap told the people. “Now you have to work to get maple syrup. You must boil the sap to make it good to eat.”

Story 2: The Discovery of Maple Syrup

Many years ago, a man came home from hunting. He threw his hunting axe into a maple tree nearby and went to sleep. While he slept, thin, watery sap dripped into a cooking bowl that was sitting on the ground. The next day, the man’s wife began to make stew for dinner. She saw the bowl of sap and added it to her stew. She cooked her stew for a long time.

When the man and woman ate the stew, they were amazed! The stew was sweet and delicious. From that day on, the woman collected the sap from the sugar maple tree and used it in her cooking.



LINKING TO LITERACY

Making Connections

To gain deeper meaning from your reading, make connections to what you have read before and to your own experiences.

- 1 Read the introductory paragraph and then describe the process that is used to make maple syrup.
- 2 What connections can you make between the process used for making maple syrup and each of the myths?
- 3 What connections can you make to your own experiences? Describe meals or desserts you have tried that were made with maple syrup.