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ARTS & CULTURE | FOOD & COOKING

All the Ways You Should Be Using Maple Syrup Now

Maple syrup satisfies an acute craving for coziness, and not just on pancakes. The complex flavor renders everything from pork roasts to pies irresistible.



HOT TIP Chile offsets maple's sweetness in a marinade for roast pork. Find the recipe for Maple-Chile Pork Roast below.

By Aleksandra Crapanzano / Photographs by F. Martin Ramin/The Wall Street Journal, Food Styling by Kim Ramin

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MAPLE SYRUP is very much a year-round essential in my kitchen. But there's always a poetry in the thought that the sap boiled down to produce the syrup we love so much is tapped from maple trees in late winter, just when we most need its comforting sweetness. Maple syrup complements the hearty cold-weather dishes we still crave while sweetly signaling spring's approach and its copious bounty.

Delicious Ways to Use Maple Syrup

Even if you don't already celebrate maple-tapping season, adding the syrup's complex flavor to your late-winter repertoire could be as easy as slathering toast with Big Spoon

Roasters Maple Cinnamon Peanut & Pecan Butter and laying a few thin apple or banana slices on top, or sprinkling crunchy maple sugar over your morning oatmeal.

At dinner you might try coating a fillet of salmon with a mixture of maple syrup, Dijon mustard and soy sauce, or tossing a spoonful into a vinaigrette for farro salad.

Maple syrup is amazingly versatile. Try swapping it in for honey or brown sugar when making granola, or stir it into creamy yogurt. If you want to feel virtuous about it, note that maple syrup is a good source of antioxidants as well as zinc, magnesium, calcium and potassium.

Feeling more indulgent? Pancakes and maple syrup are, of course, an almost inseparable pair at breakfast, and maple syrup and blueberries have a surprising affinity.

A splash of maple syrup can bring a delightful depth of flavor to cocktails, too. Abby Martinie, brand ambassador and mixologist for Four Roses Bourbon, adds maple syrup to her Old-Fashioned and replaces the usual orange bitters with both cherry and chile bitters for an added dose of sweet heat. Oak & Eden's 4 Grain & Maple infused bourbon is like a cocktail in itself. Serve it on the rocks with an orange twist.

Find the recipe for this Bourbon Maple Old Fashioned below.

In savory foods, maple offers a sweetness less overt than sugar's—just the right note in a bittersweet marinade for chicken or pork. In the recipe for maple-chile pork roast with sautéed apples below, garlic and chile oil balance the sweetness of the maple syrup in the marinade; a little lemon zest lends a welcome briskness.

For dessert, consider Marlborough pie. With its delicately boozy filling of Sherry-laced stewed apples puréed into a smooth custard base, this nearly forgotten classic merits a revival. You could use Amelia Simmons's 1796 recipe from "American Cookery" or one from Tudor England, but I'd vote for the version pastry chef Gesine Bullock-Prado provides in her latest book, "My Vermont Table," published last year.

Find the recipe for Marlborough Pie below.

Like other Vermonters, Bullock-Prado calls this time of year “stick season,” when “the trees are bare and all but the bravest wild apples have fallen.” She points out that Marlborough pie was once more common than pumpkin on the New England Thanksgiving table, and its delicious maple-syrup savor certainly conjures that region. Baked without a crust, the apple-custard filling alone makes a wonderful pudding for anyone avoiding gluten.

How to Shop for Maple Syrup

When cooking with maple syrup, look for versions labeled pure amber or dark. Though delicious in cocktails, golden maple syrup’s more-delicate flavor is not strong enough to stand up to other ingredients in cooking. At the other end of the spectrum, very dark maple syrup can be overpowering.

Needless to say, pure maple syrup is the only way to go. Anything sold as “pancake syrup” is more likely corn syrup than maple. And no artificial flavor could come close to the rich, caramelized complexity of real maple syrup.

Maple-Chile Pork Roast

TOTAL TIME: 1 day (includes marinating)

ACTIVE TIME: 1 hour

SERVES: 6-8



F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, FOOD STYLING BY KIM RAMIN

Ingredients

For the marinade:

- ½ cup maple syrup
- ½ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon chile crisp, such as Momofuku Chili Crunch, or other chile oil
- 2 teaspoons minced ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- Zest of 1 lemon

For the pork and apples:

Directions

1. Ideally 1 day or at least 8 hours before you cook the pork, start the marinade: In a large container with airtight lid, whisk together all marinade ingredients. Add pork and turn to coat thoroughly. Attach lid and refrigerate. Remove from refrigerator 1 hour before cooking.
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Set a roasting pan on stove over medium heat. Once hot, lightly coat surface of pan with oil. Lift pork out of marinade and pat dry with paper towels. Set pork in roasting pan, fat-side down, and sear, turning, until golden brown all over.

- Center-cut, bone-in pork loin roast (6-7 pounds)
- Neutral cooking oil, such as canola or grapeseed
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 6 apples, preferably Pink Lady, Granny Smith or Jonagold, each cut into 6 segments
- ½ cup heavy cream

3. Set pork in roasting pan, fat-side up. Pour marinade and 2 cups water into base of pan and transfer to oven. After 1 hour, if pan looks dry, add 1 cup water. Reduce temperature to 325 degrees and cook until a thermometer inserted in thickest part of meat reads 140 degrees, about 45 minutes more. Transfer pork to a cutting board, reserving marinade in pan. Cover pork tightly with aluminum foil and let rest until internal temperature rises to 145 degrees, 20 minutes.

4. In a large skillet over medium-low heat, melt butter. Sauté apples until beginning to darken and soften, about 5 minutes. Set roasting pan over medium heat. If pan looks dry, add a tablespoon of water. Cook, stirring, until liquid in pan reduces to a gravy-like consistency, 5 minutes. Stir in cream. Strain gravy into a pitcher.

5. Slice pork roast so that each portion has a bone, and pour on a liberal amount of gravy. Serve with sautéed apples.

—Adapted from Aleksandra Crapanzano

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Bourbon Maple Old Fashioned

TOTAL TIME: 5 minutes

MAKES: 1 cocktail



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Ingredients

- 2 ounces bourbon
- ½ ounce maple syrup
- 2 dashes orange bitters, or a combination of cherry bitters and chile bitters
- Orange twist

Directions

1. In an ice-filled shaker, combine bourbon, maple syrup and bitters. Shake 20 times to combine.
2. Strain over a large ice cube into an Old-Fashioned glass. Garnish with the orange twist.

—Adapted from Abby Martinie

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Marlborough Pie

TOTAL TIME: 3 hours (includes chilling dough and baking)

ACTIVE TIME: 1 hour

MAKES: 1 (9-inch) pie



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Ingredients

For the crust:

- ¼ cup (59 grams) ice water
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick; 113 grams) unsalted butter, cold
- 1 cup (120 g) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt

For the filling:

- 4 large apples, ideally a mix of Macoun and Russet, peeled, cored, and cut into small pieces
- 4 ounces (½ stick) butter, browned and slightly cooled
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon

Directions

1. **Make the dough:** In a medium mixing bowl, stir together ice water and lemon juice. Set aside. Cut butter into ½-inch cubes.
2. Place flour, sugar and salt in a food processor. Pulse to combine. Add cold butter and pulse until mixture looks sandy and butter breaks into pea-size pieces. While pulsing, add ice water mixture in a steady stream until dough just comes together. Do not overwork dough. Wrap dough in plastic wrap. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour before proceeding.
3. **Make the crust:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Roll dough out to a rough 12-inch round and transfer

- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- ¾ cup dry Sherry
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- 4 large eggs
- Whipped cream, to serve

to a 9-inch pie pan. Fold under edge of dough and crimp. Place a second pie pan over dough-lined pan and turn both pans upside down onto a parchment-lined sheet pan. Bake for 15 minutes, remove from oven and carefully turn right-side up. Remove top pan, return crust to oven and bake just until there is no more raw dough sheen on the bottom crust, about 5 minutes more.

4. Make the filling: Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Place apple pieces on a parchment-lined sheet pan and bake for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and lower heat to 350 degrees. Transfer apples to a food processor along with browned butter, lemon zest and juice, sugar, maple syrup, Sherry, cream, nutmeg and salt. Process until smooth. In a small bowl, whisk eggs. With food processor running, slowly pour in whisked eggs. Place blind-baked pie shell on a parchment-lined sheet pan and pour filling into crust.

5. Bake until filling is just wobbly in the middle and top of custard has formed a crust and is golden brown, 45-50 minutes. About 15 minutes into baking, make sure edges of pie are not over-

browning. When pie is finished
baking, remove from oven and let
cool completely before serving.
Serve with whipped cream.

—Adapted from “My Vermont Table” by Gesine Bullock-Prado (Countryman Press)

[Click here to view this recipe in our recipes section.](#)

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