

Maple Syrup Pecan Pie

By: Jeanne Royer, St. Albans, Vermont

Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup white sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 eggs
¼ teaspoon cider vinegar
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup pecans
1 cup pure Vermont maple syrup

Cream butter and sugar. Add unbeaten eggs and stir to combine. Add flour, salt, vanilla, cider vinegar, and maple syrup. Beat mixture well and place in unbaked pie crust. Arrange pecans on top to “catch the eye”. Bake 40 minutes in a pre-heated 400 degree Fahrenheit oven.

The above is a recipe from my Mother. Back in late 1939 and early 1940, my parents’ sugarhouse and sugarbush were about half a mile from our farmhouse. We had about 750 taps. Sometimes at the beginning of the sugaring season, the snow was so deep we used snowshoes to tap the trees and gather sap.

My Mother did the boiling while Dad and I gathered the sap with a horse-drawn sled. I really enjoyed maple sugaring time and helping my Dad. I also enjoyed making maple sugar cakes and selling them to students and teachers at school. These were the “good old days”, and the experience will forever be very memorable.

Old Time Maple Syrup Tart (*Tarte Au Sirop D'Erable Ancienne*)

By: Helen Parent, Enosburg Falls, Vermont

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups Vermont maple syrup
- 2/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 3 egg yolks, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 9" pie shell, baked

Whisk together syrup, cream, flour, beaten egg yolks, melted butter, vinegar, and salt until smooth. Put mixture in a saucepan and place over medium heat, whisking constantly until it starts to boil.

Boil for one minute longer, continuing to whisk. Pour immediately into baked pie shell. Allow to cool until set.

When sugaring time came around we used to get a ride on the sleigh that carried the gathering tank, that is, before you were old enough to help. The sleigh was pulled by two huge horses. A few years later, I helped by carrying covers to each tree that was tapped, to put onto the bucket that had just been hung onto the spout.

A little later in time, I gathered sap by the closest trees to the sleigh using a small milk pail. Naturally, there was a lot of spillage, especially carrying the sap to the gathering tank and dumping it in. Takes a while to learn all the dos and don'ts when you are small. When we had lots of snow in the woods you would sink in deep to your crotch and hardly get out of it, what with the pail you were carrying with the sap in it.

The first week of sugaring you ate supper and headed for bed. Then after that, you were able to sit around and play 500 and still get up early in the morning. You have to admit that sugaring is hard work, especially when you are young and learning the trade. We used to argue as to whose turn it was to take Dad's lunch to the sugar house. There, we had bread with reudit, which was sap not turned into syrup yet, or an egg dropped in the pan and cooked. Of course, you couldn't beat sugar on snow! Being we were a big family, I learned to cook and bake real young. My Mother taught me to make maple pie, tarte au sirop, which her mother had taught her.

Pepere and Memere's *Crapeaus* (maple dumplings)

By: Armande Tremblay, St. Albans, Vermont

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 ½ to 2 cups flour (more if needed)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 4 cups maple syrup

Beat eggs well, add milk and mix. Mix flour, baking powder and salt. Add flour mixture to liquid a little at a time until dough is not quite as thick as doughnut dough.

Heat maple syrup to a soft boil until it thickens a little. Drop dough into boiling syrup by spoonful. Turn *crapeaus* after a few minutes, cooking evenly until centers are done, approximately 6 to 8 minutes. If syrup gets too thick during boiling, add more syrup or a little bit of water.

[Editor's note: 'crapeau' is a dialect form of the French word 'crapaud', which means 'toad'. 'Memere' and 'Pepere' are terms for grandparents.]

In the year 1903, my Pepere Edward and Memere Rosanna Laroche from Roxton Falls, Quebec moved to Vermont along with their seven boys and four girls because of the poor economy in Canada. They settled on a farm in Highgate Center. The youngest of the children is still living in Highgate at the age of ninety-three. My father Omer Laroche was sixteen years old when they moved. In 1922, when he was twenty-five, he married Yvonne Plante from St. Ignace, Quebec. I was born a year later.

As a young girl I remember real well going to my grandparents' by horse and sled in the winter and horse and buggy in the summer. On Christmas each family celebrated at home. We would go to midnight mass and after have family over for *reviellon* (lunch).

On New Year's was the big holiday celebration at Pepere and Memere's house for every family. *Tourtieres* (meat pie) and *ragout de boulette* (meat balls in brown gravy) were the New Year's specialty foods. In the afternoon, singing and violin were enjoyed. Also, the men asked their father for his blessing.

Easter was the other big holiday gathering. In the afternoon the big pan of maple syrup was heating on the wood stove. When the syrup had thickened, we would lick the palette. (A *palette* is a narrow piece of wood from a chunk of maple about ½ inch thick and three inches wide that was whittled to the

shape of a paint brush with a long handle and sanded until it was real smooth.) It was dipped in the hot, thick syrup and we licked it up. It was delicious! Now you would think it is not hygienic, but the hot syrup killed all germs.

Now it's time for the *crapeaus*. The eggs were beaten by hand as there was no electricity for mixers. My uncles always seemed to make the best *crapeaus*. This recipe was brought from Quebec with my grandparents and was handed down from generation to generation. Now it has been printed and used by many people, especially Vermonters who have a lot of French Canadian ancestors. The *crapeaus* are the best when eaten right out of the hot bubbly syrup. They are a big hit at the sugar house parties.