

# RECIPE for health

APRIL 2011

In partnership with Health4U and Culinary Services

Featured Food:

## MAPLE SYRUP



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

The freezing and thawing conditions of late winter make a sloppy mess that we Michiganders must tolerate until spring arrives. In the sugarbush (sugar maple forest), fluctuating temperatures are just the ticket to get the sap flowing—the official start of maple syrup season.

While the hobbyist may use the old-fashioned bucket method for collecting sap, commercial maple syrup producers have devised a sophisticated system of taps, tubes and pumps to transport maple sap from tree tap to collection vat. In the sap house, heat is applied causing the sweet water (2% sugar) to evaporate into amber syrup (67% sugar). One tree tap yields about 10 gallons of sap, enough to make a quart of maple syrup.

Pure maple syrup, a natural sweetener with a distinctive flavor, must be categorized and labeled according to the USDA grading system. The process of making sap into syrup is the same for all grades. The differences come from the sap itself. A later sap flow contains less sugar than early flow requiring a longer boiling time to make syrup. Longer boiling time caramelizes the color, concentrates the minerals and intensifies the maple flavor. Although the current category names suggest a difference in quality, grade has much more to do with color, flavor and consumer preference. Therefore the grade names will change in 2013.

Current Grade Names	Grade Names as of 2013	Maple Flavor
Grade A Light Amber	Golden	Very delicate
Grade A Medium Amber	Amber	Mild
Grade A Dark Amber	Dark	Full-bodied
Grade B	Very Dark	Hearty, robust

Drizzled on pancakes and waffles, maple syrup has traditional appeal. Its earthy sweetness complements baked beans, oatmeal and winter squash. Maple syrup makes a simple glaze for baked ham and broiled salmon. In recipes for baked goods, you can replace one cup of sugar and three tablespoons of liquid with  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of maple syrup.

## Steel-cut Oats with Pure Maple Syrup

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 6

- 4 cups water
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
  - 1 cup steel-cut oats
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pure maple syrup
  - 2 Tablespoons honey
  - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon nutmeg
  - 1 Tablespoon ground flax seed (optional)
  - 1 Tablespoon butter
- Serve With:
- Milk (I use vanilla-flavored soy milk)
  - Dried Cherries
  - Chopped pecans

In a large sauce pot, bring water to a boil and then stir in salt and steel-cut oats. Let boil for eight to 10 minutes, stirring frequently.

Turn heat to low and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in maple syrup, honey, cinnamon, nutmeg and ground flax seed (if you are using) and continue simmering for another 10 minutes. Add the butter and taste. Adjust seasoning as desired.

While oatmeal is simmering, you can place your pecans in a non-stick sauté pan and lightly roast over medium heat, stirring frequently so they do not burn. Toast for about three to five minutes or until they start to give off a nutty aroma.

At this time, you can reserve in your refrigerator and hold for up to five days, or portion out the amount you want to eat and add toppings.

### Heating up one portion:

1. Place the cooked oats in a sauce pot and put over medium heat.
2. Add milk to the oats and stir until incorporated, heating until oats are hot (higher than 165 degrees).
3. Place the cooked oats into a bowl and garnish with dried cherries and toasted pecans.

Steel-cut Oats with Pure Maple Syrup will be served for lunch at McDonel, The Gallery, Shaw, Wilson, Yakeley, and Brody on April 21. Visit [www.eatatstate.com](http://www.eatatstate.com) for dining hall hours and menus.

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