

February 24, 2010

Sweet Season's Greetings!

I write to share details from The New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development about the upcoming spring 2010 Maple Sugaring season, which runs from mid-February to mid-April. According to the NH Maple Producers' Association ([NHMPA](#)), this is expected to be a banner year for sap, due to the generous amount of rainfall during last July and August when the trees were building their sugar. The NHMPA also predicts an early start to this year's Maple Sugaring Season, due to recent warmer than usual daytime temperatures.

New Hampshire celebrates *NH Maple Weekend* this year on March 27-28th. More than 65 sugar houses across the state open their doors to visitors offering tours of the maple orchards and sugar houses. Visitors can observe, participate and/or taste the results – such as sugar-on-snow (warm syrup poured over fresh snow makes a taffy-like candy), or a pancake breakfast. And for those who can't get enough of a good thing, many sugarhouses offer maple candy, syrup and other maple delights year-round through their websites.

NH's maple producers take great pride in the centuries old annual ritual of tapping the maple trees that provide the annual fall foliage show, including collecting and hauling the sap to their sugarhouses – some using traditional buckets and horse or oxen-drawn sledges, some with high-tech plastic tubing connecting the trees – then boiling the sap down to syrup. It takes approximately 40 gallons of sap to produce one gallon of syrup. The New Hampshire maple industry produces close to 90,000 gallons of maple syrup each season. Check out a map and the location by county of all the sugar houses in the state at www.nhmapleproducers.com. The NH Maple Producers also have a Maple Hotline, 603-225-3757. For a complete list of maple sugar offers on the VisitNH.gov website, [click here](#).

During the 2008 season, Yankee Magazine conducted a blind taste test of 19 Grade B maple syrups from all over New England, and chose New Hampshire maple syrups for ALL of their "Top 5". You can see the results [here](#).

Maple Season brings special activities throughout the state, with sugarhouses, inns and restaurants offering special events and packages. Here are several examples:

March Maple Madness – The Bed & Breakfast Inns at Mt. Washington Valley of New Hampshire will host their 7th annual *March Maple Madness* event on Saturday and Sunday, March 27th and 28th between 11AM and 4PM. This is in conjunction with the *NH Maple Weekend*. A self-guided tour of the participating inns will include the sampling of maple treats, both savory and sweet. Visiting guests can learn about "sugaring" at maple sugar houses and stop in at participating "Maple Country Partners" shops and vendors along the way. Those participating in the Maple Madness "March" will have the opportunity to gather points toward winning prizes as they travel a specific tour route guided by directions "riddled with clues." Along the way, guests must seek answers to questions, gather objects, and artifacts, as well as visit each participating Inn and Maple Country Partner. The ticket holder who scores the most points will win a \$200 certificate good toward a two-night stay at a participating [BBIInnsMWV](#) Inn, as well as other goodies provided by the Inns and Maple Country Partners.

New Hampshire Maple Festival – Maple sugaring-themed fun & games and family obstacle course events happen on Saturday morning and then in the afternoon, attendees can explore the 15+ sugar houses in the area. Saturday evening a dinner and dance will be held, where the Maple King and Queen

will be announced, and Sunday morning the event culminates with a Maple Parade down Main Street, N. Woodstock. www.nhmaplefest.com/

Maple Sugar Experience – Get your sweet tooth ready for the Rocks Estate’s New Hampshire Made Experience! Maple sugaring marks the end of a long New Hampshire winter and brings bright thoughts of spring. Join them to hear the legend of how maple sugaring began, why sap flows, and how to ID a tree. Guests can also join a horse-drawn wagon ride to tap their own maple tree and learn the process of how sap changes to syrup. Finish the day with donuts, homemade sour pickles and maple syrup. Program is approximately two hours long. Area lodging establishments are offering packages for this program. New this year the NH Maple Museum will also be open at the Rocks Estate. www.therocks.org

Stonewall Farm in West Keene, an educational, working farm in Keene, NH, presents a Sap Gathering Contest. Contestants drive teams of draft horses through sugar maples to gather 40 buckets of sap, earning points based on speed, amount of sap gathered, and teamwork. Children can join sap-carrying relay races using old-time wooden yokes. www.stonewallfarm.org

Stuart and John’s Sugar House, Westmoreland, NH has its own restaurant and serves “anything you can put syrup on.” Open weekends beginning the second weekend in February through the first weekend in April. Call 603-399-4486.

Sugar Hill Inn in Franconia offers a Maple Sugar package in conjunction with the Rocks Estate, including a 2-hour sugaring demonstration, a horse drawn wagon ride around the estate, a five-course, maple-themed dinner showcasing the culinary use of maple syrup, two nights lodging, full country breakfast each morning, casual dinner for two Friday evening and all taxes and gratuities, starting at \$385 per person. Call 800-548-4748 or visit www.sugarhillinn.com.

Christies’ Maple Farm in Lancaster, NH has a maple sugaring museum and a tasting bar for sampling the various grades of syrup. The darker the syrup, the stronger the maple intensity. www.realmple.com

Perrie Purcell, Pastry Chef at Wentworth by the Sea Hotel and Spa in New Castle (Portsmouth) will present a “Maple Panna Cotta” dessert in New York on March 3rd at the famed culinary James Beard House to guests of Historic Hotels of America – and then feature the dessert in the hotel's Wentworth Dining Room throughout March. www.wentworth.com

Old-Fashioned Fun. Come inside the new **Remick Museum Sugar House** in Tamworth with its modern evaporator system. Sample some maple treats, such as sugar-on-snow. Take a tractor-drawn wagon ride to the sugar bush, and view demonstrations of Native American, Colonial, and backyard boiler "sugaring off" methods. Admission is \$5 per person. www.remickmuseum.org

Syrup, ice cream, and sleigh-rides! Children – young and old -- love to gather sap and to taste cooled syrup on cold snow. During syrup season, many sugar houses host sleigh-rides or hayrides on the weekends for visitors. Here are a few:

Tamarack Farm in Canterbury www.geocities.com/tamfarm2001/news.html

Ragged View Farm in Andover www.raggedviewfarm.com/

The Rocks in Bethlehem – Join a horse-drawn wagon ride to tap your own maple tree and learn the process of how sap changes to syrup. Finish the day with donuts, homemade sour pickles and maple syrup www.therocks.org

Parkers Maple Barn in Mason has been a family establishment since the late 1960's. It began with nothing more than a small Sugar House by the original Parker family and has grown to become a very popular country restaurant serving hearty breakfast and lunch. www.parkersmaplebarn.com/history.php

Bisson's Sugarhouse in Berlin, NH offers an educational program on sugaring and serves maple syrup on ice cream. All-day events in late March in conjunction with the Northern Forest Heritage Park next door include horse-drawn sleigh rides if weather permits. Call 603-752-1298.

Maple Syrup Meets the Spa. Many area spas have incorporated NH Maple Sugar into their spa treatments. Who knew that maple sugar also serves as a terrific exfoliating scrub! So if you still crave more maple after the sugar houses and pancakes are finished, head to the spa for some sweet comfort:

In Whitefield, the **Mountain View Grand Resort & Spa** offers a Signature Maple Sugar Body Treatment which begins with a sugar scrub to revive the skin and ends with a light massage using maple lotion. www.mountainviewgrand.com

In Peterborough, **Wellness Works** offers a NH Maple Sugar Glow. www.wellnessworksllc.com/1758786.html.

In Jaffrey, **The Spa at the Grand View Inn & Resort** is nestled amid the splendor of New Hampshire's Mount Monadnock. For its **NH Maple Glow treatment**, Genuine NH Maple Syrup is combined with pure sugar to create an exfoliating body polish that will leave you feeling sweet all day! www.thegrandviewinn.com

In Jackson, head to the spa at the **Inn at Thorn Hill** for a rejuvenating Maple Sugar Scrub. www.innatthornhill.com/spaservices.html

One Last Maple Treat: Download from VisitNH.gov the 'official New Hampshire DTTD' recipe for Delicious Maple Bars: www.visitnh.gov/best-time-to-visit/harvest/recipe-cards.aspx

For a more extensive list of maple sugaring ideas or for more information on anything here you're interested in learning more about, please let us know.

Thanks for your consideration.

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