

## Maple Syrup Season

### Maple Syrup Season is Just Around the Corner!

If you are already familiar with the festivals which liven up Canada all year round (Winterlude, Piknic Électronik or Just For Laughs Festival), then just imagine the atmosphere that surrounds the harvesting of maple syrup each year! It is with a true love of the maple tree that Canadians have established the tradition marking the harvest season with a festive and gastronomic celebration, complete with entire meals based around the famous syrup.

#### Maple Syrup Season

Commonly known as Maple Syrup Season, this period ranges from mid-March to late May, depending on temperatures and the necessary conditions for the extraction of sap. This tradition is mostly based in the eastern regions of Canada, especially in the Province of Quebec.

Although the First Nations were the first to harvest this precious syrup drip by drip, European settlers learned the tradition and adopted more and more complex systems of extraction (trunk drilling, pipes, and tubes...). The sap was then boiled to make and even more condensed and sweet syrup (totally forgetting any idea of a diet before the summer).



#### Sugar Shacks

In order to harvest, one must first gather the sap of maple trees in the snow covered forest, and boil the liquid down in small wooden shacks built to speed up the process (official excuse), and to speed up the arrival of the celebrations based around the harvest (actual excuse).

Sweet-tooths and gourmands alike can therefore be easily found in these famous sugar shacks, partaking in all sorts of sweet and savory dishes based around maple syrup. The party is capped off by "le tire", or pulling of the syrup into and almost candy stage which is poured over the snow for a special treat. A real institution of Quebec, some even open their shacks to visitors during the season to share their dishes. The atmosphere is rustic and festive, and can be cliché for certain, but a cliché we can all love. Make your way to these charming and unique cabins from Montreal, a snow covered and fantastic drive at this time of year.

Renting a motorhome, campervan or truck in Montreal is the best way to experience the famous sugar shacks, and sample all of the delicious products based on maple syrup in the markets around Quebec. Make the most of your trip by touring the beautiful Canadian countryside in between your sugar shack stops.