



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee

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The Magic of Maple Syrup

Adding maple syrup is an easy way to enhance the flavors of your favorite foods. A drizzle of this antioxidant rich syrup can balance the tartness in your grapefruit or heighten the caramelized flavors of roasted veggies such as carrots or Brussels sprouts. Brush a little on salmon after broiling, and you will be hooked with maple syrup.

Maple Baked Stuffed Pears

4 medium firm pears, cut in half and cored	1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 cup dried cranberries	¼ cup water
1 cup walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped	¼ cup maple syrup, plus 2 tablespoon
1 tablespoon lemon juice	Maple Cardamom Cream (<i>see recipe below</i>)
1 teaspoon lemon zest	

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place pear halves cut side up in a baking dish.

In a bowl combine cranberries, walnuts, lemon juice, lemon zest, 2 tablespoons maple syrup and brown sugar. Spoon mixture into the hollowed out areas of each pear. Add water to the baking dish. Pour remaining maple syrup over and around pears. Sprinkle any remaining cranberry mixture into the bottom of the dish. Cover and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 20 to 25 minutes more or until pears are tender, basting with occasionally with cooking liquid.

To serve, place each pear on a serving plate, topping with some of the cooking liquid and any remaining cranberry mixture. Top with Maple Cardamom Cream (*see recipe below*).

Maple Cardamom Cream

½ cup heavy cream, chilled	¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
2 tablespoons maple syrup	

Whip cream with maple syrup and cardamom until soft peaks form. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Maple Muffin Meatballs

3 tablespoons brown sugar	1 pound ground pork
¼ cup real maple syrup	2 eggs, slightly beaten
¼ cup ketchup	1½ cups seasoned bread crumbs
¼ teaspoon nutmeg	½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoon dry mustard	Freshly ground pepper
1 pound lean ground beef	2 tablespoons finely chopped onion

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine brown sugar, ketchup, nutmeg, dry mustard in a small bowl; set aside. Combine meats, eggs, bread crumbs, half of the sauce, salt and pepper; mix gently until blended. Shape mixture into 12 balls and place in 3-inch muffin pans. Make small indentation in each ball and fill with the remaining sauce. Bake for 30 minutes. *Makes 12 meatballs*

Maple-Ginger Glazed Carrots

2 pounds carrots, peeled and cut diagonally into ¼-inch thick slices
¼ cup water
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
3 tablespoons butter, divided
⅓ cup pure maple syrup
1 tablespoons dark balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper
Fresh parsley leaves, chopped, for garnish

In a sauce pan combine carrots, water, ginger and 2 tablespoons butter. Cover and cook on medium for 10 minutes. Uncover and cook 2 minutes, until liquid is mostly evaporated and carrots are almost tender. Add maple syrup, vinegar, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper and heat to boiling on medium-high heat. Boil for 2 minutes; until carrots are coated with glaze. Remove from heat and stir in 1 tablespoon butter. To serve, spoon carrots into a serving dish and garnish with parsley leaves. *Makes 6 side dishes*

Maple-Blueberry BBQ Sauce

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup red onion, finely chopped
2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon ketchup
¼ cup bourbon
2¼ cups blueberries, mashed
3 tablespoons maple syrup
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

In a skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir for 5 minutes. Add jalapeno peppers and garlic; cook for 1 minute. Add chili powder, brown sugar and ketchup; cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in bourbon. Return to heat; bring to a boil.

Stir in blueberries, maple syrup and vinegar skillet. Bring back to boil, then reduce heat to low. Simmer uncovered for 20 minutes or until thickened. Transfer to blender. Cover and blend until smooth. Serve warm on roasted pork or barbecued beef or salmon.

Warm Sweet Potato and Kale Salad

2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced into wedges
1 sweet onion, halved and sliced
3 cloves garlic, smashed
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons maple syrup, divided
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon freshly cracked pepper
1 tablespoon grainy Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 bunch kale, ribs removed and chopped
½ cup toasted pecans

Preheat oven to 400°F.

In a large bowl, mix olive oil, 1 tablespoon maple syrup, salt and pepper. Add sweet potatoes, garlic and onion; toss to coat completely. Roast until sweet potatoes are golden and tender, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.

In a small bowl, mix red wine vinegar, Dijon and remaining maple syrup. Drizzle over sweet potatoes while warm. Add kale and toss to combine.

Arrange on individual plates and sprinkle with pecans. *Makes 6 servings*

