

Sugarbush-sugaring season Maple Sugar

1. Learning Objectives:

Students learn about

- Maple sugar as food
- Old ways of harvesting
- New tools for harvesting, process
- Three products made from maple sap and one product used most often today
- Anishinaabe families have strong traditions
- Discover contributions made by Anishinaabe people
- Impact of invention on historical change

2. Key Concepts

- What culture used maple sap for food?
- Where did the sap come from?
- Why was maple sap harvested? How did the maple sap sustain people?
- What tools were used?
- What harvesting technique was important?
- What happened after the sap was harvested?
- Name three products made from maple sap.
- Name one product used mostly today not used long ago.
- How was maple sap used for cooking?

3. Teachers Quick Reference

Places:

White Earth Nation

Mille Lacs Nation

Bois Forte Nation

Fond Du Lac Nation

Grand Portage Nation

Red Lake Nation

Leech Lake Nation

Early spring begins the maple sugar harvest.

Anishinaabe includes the Ojibwe People. The Dakotah/Lakotah/Nakotah harvested sap during the time before the migration of the Ojibwe.

The harvest of the sap would involve the whole family. Kids would miss school for this harvest, but do homework on tar paper.

Maple sugar was very important to Anishinaabe People as a means to feign off hunger.

Sumac and maple sap would be harvested.

The sap is very thin and clear.

Sap would be boiled into sugar, cakes, taffy.

Cedar sticks were carved and used as a spigot. To put the stick in the tree, a bone hatchet was used and the sap would drip into a birch bark basket.

The “v” shape of the spigot was important to create a “gully”

Sap would be boiled in cast iron kettles. Cheese cloth would be used to strain the syrup to clean it.

Maple sugar, cakes, and taffy were made. Today we use the syrup too.

Maple sugar was used as a spice for fish, wild rice and deer meat.

Ceremonial food because it is tied into the culture. In the old days, syrup was not kept because it was hard to store.

Sugar or cakes were the intended product. The sugar took longer to make. It was a desired commodity. It showed a lot of respect when you offered maple sugar.

Maple sugar was so hard to get. It was so important, it was not bartered. It was given. It was and is a very traditional food source.

Birch bark containers have been replaced by metal containers. Metal taps have replaced many of the cedar taps, many people drive to the maple groves where in the past they camped.

4. Content Review

In which season does the maple sugar harvest take place?

What is collected from the trees? What does this look like?

For which people is this harvest traditional? Who would help?

Name three tools used long ago and today to harvest maple sap to make into sugar. Why did the tools change? (have to watch video carefully)

What harvest technique is important in harvesting maple sap?

How does the maple sap become sugar?

Name three products made from maple sap.

Which product was typically only given away?

A long time ago, what problem or need was maple sugar used to solve?

Why is maple sugar considered ceremonial?

5. Discussion Question

Locate the seven Ojibwe Nations.

A long time ago, what events may have happened to lead the Anishinaabe people to make maple sugar?

What is the difference between maple syrup and maple sugar/ taffy?

A long time ago, why would it be difficult to store maple syrup?

What is meant by ‘considered ceremonial’?

Describe how this harvest involved the whole family.

How does the process of boiling sap change the sap?

How do you think a person knows when to remove the sap from the fire?

Describe how maple sap and its products are a contribution to today. List uses.

Have you had maple sugar/taffy? If no, what do you think it tastes like and how would you use it?

What changes to the method of harvesting are there today compared to a long time ago? What causes changes?

Did all people from nations across the United States harvest maple sugar? Why or why not?

references:

<http://www.nativetech.org/sugar/sugarbush.html>. NativeTech: Native American Technology & Art, Sugar Bush iswi-baakwa-togan, An Ojibwe Account of Maple Sugaring, Pierre Gerard.

<http://discussions.mnhs.org/collections/2011/03/maple-sugaring-bucket/> Maple Sugaring Bucket