

# Legend Has It....



Although no one really knows how the Native Americans first found out about maple sugaring, there are plenty of legends. One tale tells of an Indian brave who was caught napping under a maple tree instead of fetching water. As a gentle reminder, his wife placed the water bucket next to the sleeping brave. When he woke and found the bucket, the brave was furious! Fetching water was woman's work! He slashed at the tree with his hatchet and kicked the bucket against it as he stormed off to hunt. When his wife returned later in the day, she was delighted to find the bucket full of "water" and used it to cook their evening meal. The angry brave returned later to be soothed by the sweet, gooey sauce covering his supper, for the "water" had been maple sap which boiled down to syrup.

Another legend comes from the Anishinabe of the Great Lakes region. According to this story, Gitchee Manitou made life easy for his people. Sweet syrup dripped from the twigs in the forest, game was plentiful and his people became fat and lazy. To teach his people a lesson, he poured water into the tops of the maple trees. Then only watery sap came out of the trees and only at the time of year before fishing, planting and gathering. From that time on, the people had to boil the sap for hours and hours with heated stones to have their syrup and sugar.