

# Maple Syrup Study Finds 20 Disease-Fighting Antioxidants in Pure Canadian Maple Syrup

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Summary:A healthful alternative to other sugars, pure maple syrup is a flavourful staple for cooking and has various culinary uses beyond breakfast, from a touch of sweet in tea, drizzled over vegetables, or as a glaze for grilled poultry and fish.

25 Mar 2010 --- In a new research study conducted by the University of Rhode Island, Dr. Navindra Seeram discovered more than 20 compounds linked to human health in Canadian maple syrup, 13 of which were discovered for the first time in maple syrup. Seeram, assistant professor of biomedical and pharmaceutical sciences in URI's College of Pharmacy, unveiled his findings Sunday, March 21 at the American Chemical Society's Annual Meeting.

"We already know the maple tree has strong antioxidant mechanisms," Seeram said. "Now we are looking more closely at the tree's sap." Several of these antioxidant compounds are also reported to have anti-cancer, anti-bacterial and anti-diabetic properties. "People are increasingly interested in healthier food alternatives," Seeram said.

Prior to the study, The Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers and the Canadian maple syrup industry knew the product was full of natural minerals and vitamins, including zinc, manganese and calcium, providing the basis for a research study with comprehensive health findings. The Federation awarded Seeram a two-year grant funded in conjunction with the Conseil pour le developpement de l'agriculture du Quebec (CDAQ) and Agriculture and Agrifood Canada (AAC).

Seeram found the same antioxidant compounds also contained in berries, an exciting development because he would not previously have associated a sweetener with healthy biological properties. "Today, Americans have great interest in learning the health benefits of unique foods," Seeram said.

Seeram also advised that when choosing syrup as a sweetener, it is healthier to use 100 percent pure maple syrup. He referred to a survey conducted by the Federation, which found that 50 percent of Americans are unaware if the syrup they consume is real maple syrup or pancake syrup.

"Many Quebec producers come from a family with a long tradition of maple syrup production and we are committed to the product because we know that maple syrup is a sustainable and versatile product," Serge Beaulieu, president of the Federation said. Genevieve Beland, marketing executive, adds, "A healthful alternative to other sugars, pure maple syrup is a flavourful staple for cooking and has various culinary uses beyond breakfast, from a touch of sweet in tea, drizzled over vegetables, or as a glaze for grilled poultry and fish."

"In a certain sense, people view sap as the life blood of the tree," Seeram said. "Maple syrup is unique in that it is the only product in our diet that comes from a plant's sap." Historically, many cultures have benefited from its health benefits as a homeopathic remedy for ailments, including flu, stomach aches, high blood pressure and cholesterol. Maple syrup's high levels of zinc and manganese can assist in heart health and boosting the immune system.