

**Tune in tonight**

A new documentary series airing on CBC Television, *The Great Food Revolution: A Citizen's Guide to Eating in the 21st Century*, takes viewers on a gastronomic journey and explores how we have transformed the way we eat, drink and think about food. The four-part series concludes tonight at 8 p.m. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

# Food

## The main syrup-producing trees are sugar maples, red maples and silver maples.



**One tree**  
During the maple sugaring season an average tree yields between 35 and 50 litres of sap, this will produce between 1 and 1.5 litres of maple syrup.

BARB HOLLAND/FOR METRO CANADA

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# Secret's in the syrup

**À la carte**

**Barb Holland**



metronews.ca/alacarte

It's finally spring and that heralds many things — shedding heavy clothing for one, and celebrating maple syrup season for another.

Canada produces about 85 per cent of the world's maple syrup and sells to nearly 45 countries. The majority comes from Quebec, by far the world's largest producer, with about 75 per cent of world production. Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia produce smaller amounts. Vermont is the largest U.S. producer along with other northeastern states.

Maple syrup is graded as: Canada #1: Extra Light, Light and Medium (for table use); Canada #2: Amber (stronger flavour, ideal for cooking), Canada #3: Dark (for commercial use only).

Beyond pancakes and waffles, maple syrup is tasty in many things, as these squares will attest. Be sure to buy Canadian and check the label says pure maple syrup.

**Maple Walnut Oat Squares**

Other nuts can be used in place of walnuts or add dried cranberries or raisins if you prefer. Makes 18 squares.



Beyond pancakes and waffles, maple syrup is tasty in many things, as these squares will attest.

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1/3 cup (75 ml) butter
- 1 cup (250 ml) pure maple syrup
- 2 cups (500 ml) rolled oats
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped walnuts
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

**METHOD:**

Line a 9-inch (23-cm) square baking pan with a parchment paper sling (a few inches of paper hanging over two ends). Spray the other 2 sides with non-stick cooking spray. Pre-heat oven to 375°F (190°C).

In medium saucepan, bring butter and maple syrup to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue cooking for 3 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in oats, walnuts and egg, mixing well. Spread evenly in prepared pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Cool 10 minutes or wire rack. Run a thin metal spatula around edges. Use the parchment paper overhanging ends to lift the entire slab to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut into

squares. Refrigerate, if desired, to firm up.

**Tips:**

- Store maple syrup in the refrigerator.
- During the growing season, maple trees accumulate starch. With the spring thaw, enzymes change this starch into sugar, which mixes with the water absorbed through the roots, importing a slightly sweet taste. Maple sap contains water (about 97 per cent), minerals, organic acids and a mild maple flavour. In early March, the sap starts to run for about six to eight weeks.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

## Riding the Recession

### Meals for a steal

**Sarah's Falafel & Shawarma**  
487 Bloor St. W.  
416-975-9986

An unassuming little find in the Annex area with a storefront that's easy to miss. But locals know the deal — killer falafels and shawarmas that delight even the most hardcore fans. All Middle-Eastern and Mediterranean dishes come cheaply and you can easily stuff yourself for less than \$10. For that extra *je ne sais quoi*, don't forget to ask for the hot sauce.

## Liquid Assets

**Peter Rockwell**



metronews.ca/liquidassets

## Eco-sipping

### EarthHour

Truth be told, organic booze takes up more grey area on the shelf than it does green. The problem is standards.

International regulations as to what really constitutes an organic product vary considerably; with consumers and retailers alike using the term to cover just about anything with a flower on the label.

When it comes to wine there are very few made with one hundred per cent organic juice. The grapes may be organically grown (using biodynamic farming methods and no chemicals in the vineyard) but there can still be limited artificial stabilization used during the actual winemaking.

Not to downplay how serious many wineries are in gaining (and keeping) their organic status. History tells the best tales and there isn't a winemaker with more time to the cause (or with more varietal variety) than California's **Bonterra Vineyards**.



Their **2006 Zinfandel (\$18.95 - \$21.99)** is rich and aromatic with loads of dark chocolate and warm earthiness that would make a perfect partner for beef.

On the spirit side you can make your martinis au naturel with **Square One Vodka (\$40.59 - \$52.99)**. Made with organically grown American rye it's a smooth, silky vodka that loses nothing in the translation.



Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

Peter Rockwell is the everyday wine writer, working in the liquor industry for more than 25 years and travelling the globe looking for something to fill his glass and put into words.

## In brief

**LIGHTS OUT** Hotel guests at The Fairmont Royal York will have the opportunity to be carbon responsible as they check in by candlelight during Earth Hour, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Saturday. During Earth Hour, The Fairmont Royal

York's Library Bar welcomes lounging guests to candlelight service and a special Earth Hour drink menu. In 2008, The Fairmont Royal York was the first Toronto hotel to register its Earth Hour participation. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



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