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**Food Facts: What Are the Differences Between 'Grade A' Maple Syrup and 'Grade B' Maple Syrup?**

Grade B Maple Syrup is Higher in Nutrients Than Grade A

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Real maple syrup has a delicious, distinct taste. It's a vegan friendly, all-natural sweetener with health benefits. Whether you're pouring maple syrup over pancakes or waffles, adding it to a butternut squash or sweet potato recipe or stirring it into oatmeal or yogurt, its earthy taste is like no other.

There are different grades of pure maple syrup. The Federal USDA regulates the categories according to flavor and color.

**Grade A Maple Syrup**

According to the [Massachusetts Maple Producers Association,](http://www.massmaple.org/grades.php) Grade A Maple Syrup is segmented into 3 classifications; generally referred to as US Grade A Light Amber, US Grade A Medium Amber and US Grade A Dark Amber. While regulations are consistent, some states (and Canada) use different terminology to differentiate between the classifications.

Grade A Light Amber (also called Fancy Grade or No. 1 Extra Light) is made early in the six-week maple production season, when the weather is cold. This grade is light in color as well as taste; the maple flavor is delicate. Because of its mild flavor, light amber maple syrup is the grade most commonly used in maple candies and creams.

Grade A Medium Amber is made mid-season, as the weather starts to warm up. This grade is darker in color and has a richer maple flavor than light amber. Grade A Medium Amber is popular, it's the syrup most commonly found on grocery store shelves and in restaurants that use real maple syrup.

Grade A Dark Amber is made when the days grow longer and the temperatures continue to rise. As the name indicates, this grade is darker than medium amber and has a more intense maple flavor.

**Grade B Maple Syrup**

You may have heard Grade B Maple Syrup referred to as Cooking Syrup. This grade is dark and has a robust maple flavor. In fact, the flavor is so rich and multidimensional that you may detect caramel undertones. Grade B is a good choice for cooking and baking if you want a strong maple flavor added to your foods. This grade is made the latest in the six-week maple production season.

**Health Benefits**

[The World's Healthiest Foods Website](http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=115) confirms that all grades of maple syrup are an outstanding source of manganese and a good source of zinc. Because sap from the beginning of maple syrup season yields paler syrups, as the season progresses the syrup gets darker. Darker syrup is more nutrient rich. So if you're accustomed to reaching for Grade A, give Grade B a try. It's the darkest of all the maple syrups and has the highest nutritional value.

You'll find Grade B Maple Syrup in most health food stores, specialty groceries and online.