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aroma and flavor

toasted	baked apple brioche golden sugar crème brûlée	toasted nuts roasted marshmallow burnt sugar caramel coffee
milky	fresh butter condensed milk	melted butter butterscotch
fruity		
		
	honey floral blend	
	grassy oats mushroom	hay
	praline bourbon spiced meat mineral notes	dark chocolate soy sauce leather

taste

	sweetness	← balance →	maple intensity
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mouthfeel

	smooth	←————→	mineral
	thin	syruy	thick

tasting maple syrup

The map of maple is a sensory tool, allowing you to explore all the wondrous possibilities of Vermont maple syrup. Here are some hints for tasting on your own.

Smell the syrup before tasting. Try to identify any distinct aromas. Take a look at the list of **aroma and flavor** descriptors as a guide.

Take a small sip of the syrup. Move the syrup in your mouth briefly, and **feel** the texture. See the **mouthfeel** section for suggestions.

Then, evaluate the taste characteristics. See the **taste** section for suggestions. For all the sensory properties evaluated, see the **map of maple** for a guide.

the map of maple: off- avors

mother nature	sour sap	ropey appearance citrus, soy sauce, fermented aromas sour taste thick, chunky mouthfeel	
	metabolism	chocolaty, grassy aroma lack of maple avor cardboard, popcorn, peanut butter avors dry mouthfeel	
	buddy	chocolaty aroma and avors lingering aftertaste	
defoamer	saf ower and vegetable oils	vegetable aroma and avor oily, waxy mouthfeel	
	canola oil	spicy, peppery avors walnut, pungent nish astringent mouthfeel	
processing	burnt	scorch	burnt avors (coffee, dark chocolate) thick body
		niter	burnt avors (coffee, dark chocolate) leathery, spicy meat avor chalky, gritty mouthfeel
	storage	fermented	yeasty alcohol aroma honey, fruity, spicy (soy sauce), vegetable avors thin body foamy appearance (severe fermentation) effervescent mouthfeel
		metallic	tin can aroma strong metallic avor (affects back tongue and teeth)
chemicals	minerals / niter	zzy, gritty mouthfeel	
	chloride	salty taste	
	acid / basic	acid or caustic odor (depending on chemical) pungent, burning sensations	
others	musty / mold	moldy, yeasty, vegetable aromas and avors lingering nish (affects back tongue and throat)	
	detergents	perfumy, oral aromas soapy avor	
	lubricants / fuels	petroleum aroma and avor oily mouthfeel astringent nish	



lters

these defects could stem from misuse or mishandling of syrup lters

tasting maple syrup

The flavor and overall sensory quality of maple syrup can be influenced by multiple factors. Outside the sugarhouse, these include environmental conditions, location, and time in the season; inside the sugarhouse these include method of production, as well as filter and packaging conditions. This sensitivity makes the flavor of maple syrup susceptible to flavors not considered “typical.”

This tool is meant to identify off-flavors in syrup, and link the particular sensory experience to a specific defect and category that explains why the defect has occurred. Additionally, this tool serves as a user-friendly representation of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Farms and Markets (VAAF) “Maple Syrup Off-Flavors” manual.

The descriptors on the right describe the aroma, taste and/or mouthfeel of the defective syrup (ex. “chocolatey aroma and flavors, lingering aftertaste”), paired on the middle column with the specific cause of defect (ex. “buddy”). The defects are then grouped by type of defect (example: “mother-nature”) in order to better identify off-flavors, and to troubleshoot future batches. The triangle in the lower left corner denotes a defect linked to misuse or mishandling of filters.

sampling your syrup



Smell the syrup before tasting, note any atypical smells. Consult the list of descriptors to match any atypical aromas to their potential causes listed on the left.



Taste the syrup, note of the taste and the mouthfeel. Repeat the process described above.



Evaluate the syrup. If the troubleshooting guide indicates, address any issues with filters or processing equipment.

the taste of Vermont

A team of researchers, sugarmakers and sensory panelists collaborated over several years by evaluating maple syrup from throughout the state of Vermont. The result was two sensory tools to help sugarmakers determine the quality of the maple syrup each season. It was jointly developed by the Nutrition and Food Sciences Department at University of Vermont and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets. State funds for this project were matched with Federal funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.