

RESOURCE TRANSCRIPT

Title: Mason Presents: Abenaki Stories: Gluskabe Changes Maple Syrup

Author: Adapted from "Maple Sugaring Among the Abenaki and Wabanaki Peoples" by Brian Chenevert, Nulhegan Band of Coosuk Abenaki Nation, <https://abenakitribe.org/about-maple-syrup>.

Caption: A traditional Abenaki story about why maple syrup is made in the spring.

Credit: Produced by the New Hampshire Historical Society

Narrator: Long ago, the lives of the Abenaki people were very good, with lots of food and gifts from the Creator. One of the most special gifts was the maple tree. The maple sap ran thick and sweet from the trees all the time. All you had to do was break off a branch and the delicious syrup would flow out.

Now from time to time, Gluskabe would go from village to village to keep an eye on the people. One day he came to a village that seemed like it had been abandoned. There was nobody in sight. The fields were overgrown and the fires were all out. Gluskabe searched and searched until he finally came upon a forest of beautiful maple trees. As he got closer, he saw that all the people from the village were lying on their backs under the trees. They had all broken off the ends of branches and maple sap was dripping into their mouths. The people could barely move because they had drunk so much maple sap. Gluskabe told them to go back and do the work that needed to be done in the village, but the people didn't listen to Gluskabe. They didn't want to go back to their village. They just wanted to lie there under the trees, drinking syrup.

So Gluskabe made a large bucket from birch bark and went to the river to get water. He poured the water into the maple trees over and over again. The water turned the sap from thick and sweet into thin and watery. The people of the village asked Gluskabe why their thick and sweet drink was gone. Gluskabe told the people that from now on, if they wanted the syrup, they would have to work hard to get it. They had to make their own birch bark buckets to collect the sap. They had to gather wood and build fires. They had to boil the sap over a fire so it would turn back into a thick, sweet syrup. And now they could only have the sap once a year, in the early spring. They didn't get to have it all year round any more. To this day, people need to work hard to turn maple sap into maple syrup. And, it can only be made in the spring.