

## Maple Madness

### *Mommy's Gone Shopping Again (Blog)*

Overtaken by maple madness, Brown County, Ind. gears up for the 2015 National Maple Syrup Festival, March 5-8. With less than a week until festivities kick off, something sweet is definitely happening in Brown County. From live sugaring demonstrations and historical reenactments to a culinary competition, pancake breakfast, and much more, there is something for everyone to enjoy at this year's National Maple Syrup Festival.

Festivities begin on March 5 and 6 with a Dinner Series, featuring maple masters Christine Tailer and Dr. Mike Farrell.

On Thursday and Friday, Farrell and Tailer will share their tapping tales, sugaring adventures, and much more while guests dig in to a dinner featuring maple-based dishes. The Dinner Series will be held at the Brown County History Center, beginning at 6 p.m. both nights. Tickets are \$35 per person, with beer pairings for an additional \$7.50 per person. Information on speakers and tickets are available online at <http://nationalmaplesyrupfestival.com/dinner-series-speakers/> or can be purchased in person at the Brown County Visitors Center.

The festivities continue the next couple of days, kicking into full swing on March 7 and 8. Guests will be able to join in the maple madness on Saturday and Sunday at various locations throughout Brown County, including the State Park, the Village of Nashville, as well as the Story Inn. Activities taking place at the State Park are headquartered at the Lower Shelter. There festival goers can expect to see live reenactments of Native American and French Colonial maple sugaring techniques, as well as modern day sugaring demonstrations. Both days the Dutch Oven Diva also will be preparing one-of-a-kind maple creations cooked live over a campfire for guests to sample. Gourmet hot chocolate by Brooke's Candy Co. and maple marshmallows from 240Sweet will be up for grabs as well. State Park activities will take place on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Naturalists from the State Park also will lead guests on interpretive hikes where festival guests will learn about the tapping process, learn to identify maple trees, as well as taste their sap. Hikes will take place on March 7 at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. and on March 8 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Hikes will depart from the Lower Shelter. Admission to the park will be \$5-7; however, once inside all festivities are free of charge.

On Saturday and Sunday, festival guests can head into town, where they will be able to experience the Village of Nashville like never before. Guests can step back in time at the Pioneer Village, where there will be pioneer-era reenactments of salt boiling, hide curing, spinning, and weaving, as well as puppet shows, horse-powered maple ice cream making, and maple-related art and food vendors. Pioneer Village will be open on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission to Pioneer Village will be \$5; children 12 and younger are free.

Also in town, guests can enjoy Native American storytelling and a social dance at the Brown County History Center. On Saturday, storytelling will take place from 10 a.m. to noon, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The stories will continue on Sunday at the Artists Colony Inn from 10 a.m. to noon and again from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Meanwhile, a Native American social dance is slated for Saturday, March 7

from 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Guests are invited to join in this annual rite of spring, performed by descendants of the Delaware and Shawnee. Both events are at the History Center and are free of charge.

Additionally, on Saturday, March 7 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., fun activities will be available for children at the Brown County Public Library, including storytelling, coloring, and maple-shaped cookie decorating. On Sunday there also will be a church service by Horseman's Camp Christian Outreach in the Village Green Pavilion at 9:30 a.m. All three events are free.

Guests can definitely expect to find plenty of maple on the menu in and around town as well. During the Festival, some of Brown County's finest restaurants will be serving sweet and savory maple-infused dishes to highlight the variety of foods that can be enhanced with pure maple syrup as an ingredient. Not only will restaurants feature dishes that bring a unique maple twist to classic favorites, there also will be truly one-of-a-kind maple creations on the menu too. Participating restaurants will be designated with a "Maple on the Menu" sign, and all are listed on the Festival website.

Of course no maple syrup festival would be complete without pancakes, which is exactly why Chris Cakes will be serving up delicious hotcakes with a side of entertainment during the Festival's Pancake Breakfasts on March 7 and 8. Breakfasts are all-you-can-eat and will be held at Brown County High School from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for ages 3-18; children 2 years and younger are free. Tickets are available at the door.

Meanwhile, the Story Inn will be home to the Sweet Victory Challenge on March 7 and 8. Sponsored by Burton's Maplewood Farm, the Sweet Victory Challenge is the Festival's national recipe contest, attracting food enthusiasts from all over the Midwest. On Saturday and Sunday, maple recipes submitted as part of the national contest will be prepared and judged at the Story Inn. Competitions will take place at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., and 2 p.m. on both days; events are free of charge.

Live entertainment and live art demonstrations also will be taking place on Saturday and Sunday as part of the Festival. Those interested in music can head to the Brown County Playhouse on Saturday, March 7 for the Brown County Music Celebration or the Brown County High School on Sunday, March 8 for Wilderness Ballads. Tickets for the Music Celebration are \$12 and are available online at <https://www.browncountyplayhouse.org/tickets>; Wilderness Ballads tickets are available at the door for \$20 or can be purchased in advance for \$15 by calling [812-988-6960](tel:812-988-6960).

Additionally, the Festival will feature an Artists Paint Out, presented by the Brown County Art Gallery Artists Association and the Indiana Plein Air Painters Association. On both Saturday and Sunday, artists will set up at various locations throughout the county to capture maple syrup festivities. Guests are welcome to watch artists as they paint live and to buy paintings directly from them, as well as from the Brown County Art Gallery where they will be on display for a show and sale Saturday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

With so much to do and see, the National Maple Syrup Festival is definitely worth checking out. Learn more about the Festival at [nationalmaplesyrupfestival.com](http://nationalmaplesyrupfestival.com) and be sure to make plans to attend March 5-8.