

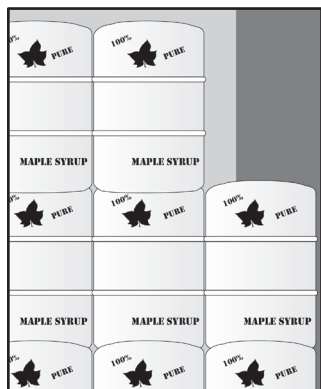
A Sweet Heist



Most maple syrup is from Canada. It comes from farms. Most of the farmers belong to a group. This group is called the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers. The farmers sell their syrup to the Federation. The Federation sells the syrup to stores.

Maple trees make sap. Maple syrup comes from sap. The syrup is expensive. It takes 39 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

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Maple syrup is kept in barrels. The barrels are in warehouses. Warehouses are large buildings. Every year, the barrels must be counted. The Federation hires accountants. The accountants go to warehouses. The accountants count barrels.

The barrels are heavy. They each weigh 600 pounds. Every warehouse has thousands of barrels. The barrels are piled in stacks. The stacks are six barrels high. Accountants climb the stacks. This is how accountants count the barrels.

In 2012, one accountant went to a warehouse in Quebec. He climbed and counted. He climbed up the stacks—one, two, three, four, five... And almost fell to his death. The top barrel was empty. It hit the ground.

Did someone forget to fill the top barrel? Or was it more than that?

The accountant wanted to know. He looked for an answer. He found one. It was shocking. The maple syrup was gone. More than \$18 million worth of syrup was gone.



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The warehouse usually held more syrup. It usually had \$30 million worth of maple syrup. But nobody had been watching. There were no guards and cameras. There was only a tiny lock on the door. No one had thought that someone would steal maple syrup.

It would not be easy to steal so much maple syrup. It isn't a job for one person. Each barrel weighs 600 pounds. A lot of people had to help. They had to work together. They had to move it. They had to hide it.

The police came. They looked for clues. They found suspects. They arrested 26 people. Only two people said they did it. The rest said they did not. There was a person in charge of the heist. He went to jail. He had to be in jail for eight years. He had to pay millions of dollars in fines.

