

A Sweet Heist

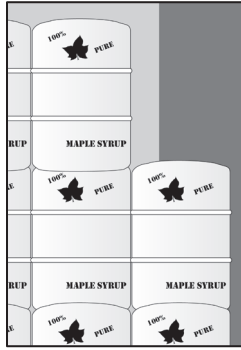


Maple syrup is a big business in Canada. Quebec, Canada, supplies most of the maple syrup for the whole world.

There are many maple farms in Canada. Most farmers are part of a group called the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers. They sell their syrup to the Federation. The Federation sells the syrup to stores.

Maple syrup is made from tree sap and is very expensive. One barrel of syrup costs 13 times more than a barrel of crude oil. Crude oil is what we use to make gasoline for cars. The reason it is so expensive is because it takes 39 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

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The Federation stores the maple syrup in barrels. The barrels are stored in warehouses. Warehouses are large buildings used for storing things. Most of the Federation's warehouses are in Quebec. Every year, the Federation sends an accountant to count the barrels in each warehouse.

Each barrel of syrup weighs 600 pounds. They pile the barrels in stacks that are six barrels high. The accountant needs to climb the stacks to count the barrels.

In 2012, the Federation sent an accountant to one particularly large warehouse in Quebec. The accountant began to climb the barrels. He climbed one, two, three, four, five... and then almost fell to his death. The top barrel was empty and could not support his weight. It went flying to the ground below him, almost taking him down in the process.

Did someone forget to fill one of the barrels, or was it more than that?

The Federation's accountant started to investigate. What he discovered was astounding. Someone had stolen \$18 million worth of maple syrup. Instead of syrup, many of the barrels were filled with water. Some were just plain empty, like the one that nearly killed him in the first place.

In all, this warehouse usually held \$30 million worth of maple syrup. But since it never occurred to anyone that someone might try to steal maple syrup, there was no security. No one guarded the warehouse. There were no security cameras. There was only one tiny lock on the door.



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Stealing so many barrels of maple syrup isn't easy. It isn't a one-person job. After all, the barrels weigh 600 pounds each. A heist of this size required a lot of people working together. In addition to being heavy, the barrels are also big. The thieves needed a big warehouse of their own to store so many barrels.

The police got involved and investigated. They heard reports of delivery trucks coming and going at weird hours. Soon, they had some leads and started arresting suspects. In all, police arrested 26 people. Of these, only 2 people admitted to being guilty. The rest of the people who were arrested said they were innocent. The ringleader, the person in charge of the heist, went to jail for eight years. He had to pay millions of dollars in fines.

