

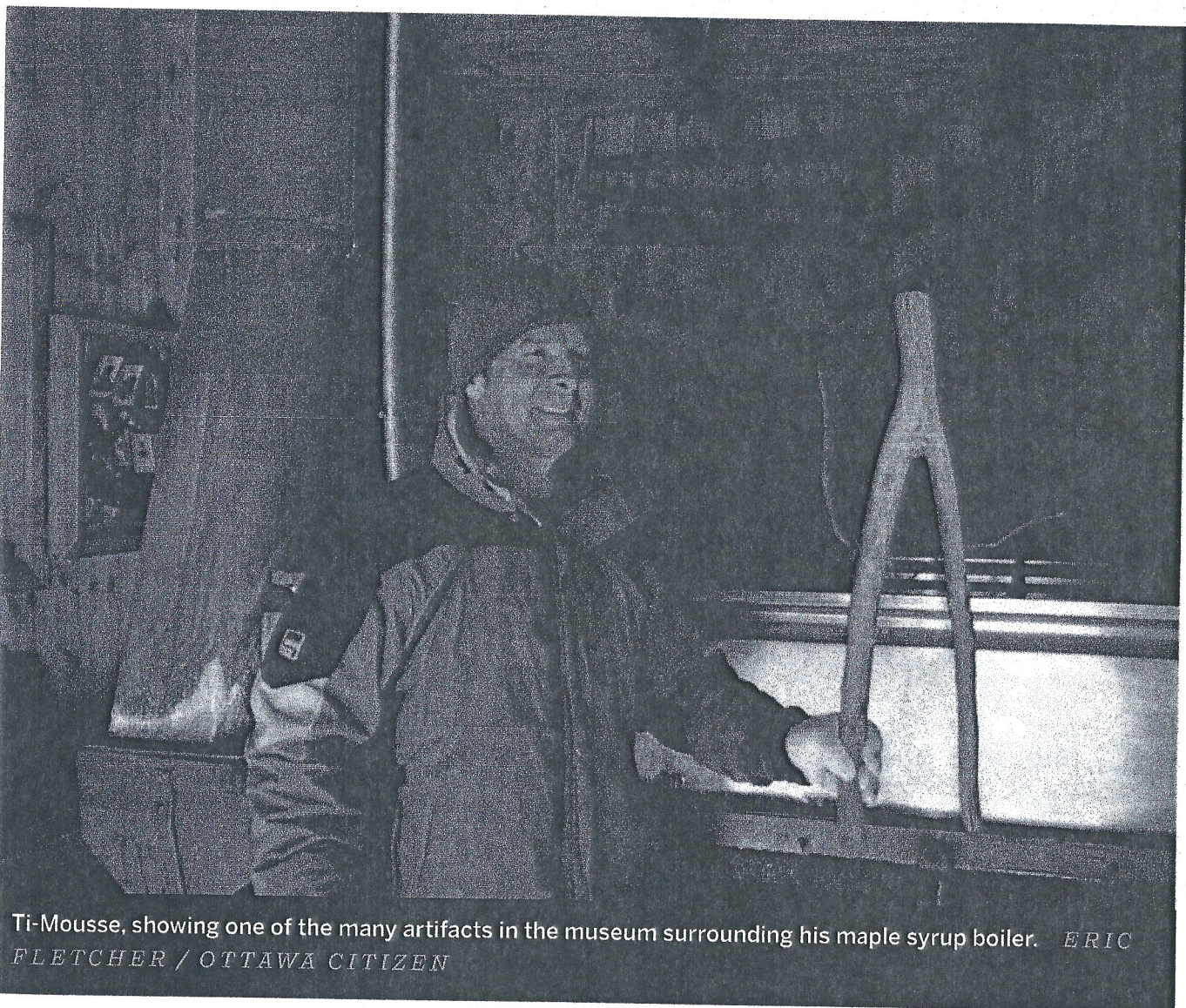
# 5 maple sugar bushes worth the drive



KATHARINE FLETCHER

More from Katharine Fletcher ([HTTP://OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/AUTHOR/KATHERINE-FLETCHER](http://ottawacitizen.com/author/katherine-fletcher))

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Ti-Mousse, showing one of the many artifacts in the museum surrounding his maple syrup boiler. *ERIC FLETCHER / OTTAWA CITIZEN*



Writer Katharine Fletcher is sweet on these sucreries ... find out why

The sweet season is upon us and kids of all ages love getting out and about to savour the maple goodness as the promise of spring beckons. Ottawans are fortunate: after all, we can stay in the city itself and go to North America's only urban sugar bush – and celebrate Vanier Museopark's SugarFest (March 23-29 [museoparc.ca](http://museoparc.ca)).

However, if we want to explore our region, here are some other equally delicious destinations.

## **Cabane à sucre Chez Ti-Mousse**

442 St-Charles Rang, Papineauville, QC  
[cheztimousse.com](http://cheztimousse.com) (<http://cheztimousse.com/>)

### **What's special?**

Storyteller and owner Ti-Mousse enjoys explaining how sap was gathered in pioneer days. An on-site museum resembles a home where religious paraphernalia (e.g. a wooden cross from the Père Blancs of the Vanier Museopark estate), join antique sugar bush equipment, utensils and furniture. Peek in through the doorway to see what you recognize.

### **What should I expect?**

A sign "Bienvenue La Bouillotte de Chez Ti-Mousse" welcomes you to where sap is boiled (and where the museum is). Enter to see long stainless steel tanks reducing the sap to syrup. It'll be a fragrant spot in the midst of the sugaring-off season.

### **Is there a restaurant on-site?**

Yes, and it serves a "lumberman" style of hearty fare including some lesser-known, traditional French Canadian specialties such as "Oreilles de crisses." I asked Ti-Mousse what this is, and he said,



"Deep-fried pork cheeks."

### **What else is there to do?**

"We have a team of horses and they pull a couple of wagons for us, through the bush. People love to see how the sap is collected: it's a way to reconnect with the past."

Although most sap here is collected in buckets the old-fashioned way, on other woodlots he owns, sap is gathered by plastic tubing which is more functional and less labour intensive.

### **Details, details**

Head to Chez Ti-Mousse via Highway 50 and stay on it to exit 197 north. In 500 metres turn right onto Côte des Cascades; continue one kilometre to turn right onto Côte St. Charles. Ti-Mousse is about three kilometres south, on your left. Parking is free. **Tip?** Ti-Mousse advises go for brunch in early afternoon, avoiding the earlier morning lineup.



The sugar shack at Parc Omega. *ERIC FLETCHER*



# Parc Omega

399 Route 323 North, Montebello, QC

[parcomega.ca/en/](http://parcomega.ca/en/) (<http://www.parcomega.ca/en/>)

## What's special?

A sugar shack is a new feature here this year. Drive to the north end of the grounds to the parking lot (free) at the Trapper's Cabin). On the map, this area is called "Les chevreuils" (the deer) – you'll soon find out why. There are toilets here.

## What should I expect?

Take snowshoes (or rent at Park House) at the Park's entrance. At the parking lot near the Trapper's Cabin, head to the sugar shack (roughly a kilometre on easy trails (if there's not been a snowfall, you can walk using your boots). At the shack, see sap being boiled and taste tire-sur-neige.

**Tip:** Purchase at least one bag of carrots at Park House. As you drive to the deer yard, lots of animals will approach your car for food. Never get out of your car, but do roll down the window and give animals a carrot. Break the carrots into sections or else buy more than one bag!

## Is there a restaurant on-site?

Not at the sugar bush. There's a restaurant, gift shop and toilets at Park House.

## What else is there to do?

Explore and learn about the animals. Take your camera – or smart phone to capture awesome "selfies with critters."

When going to the sugar shack, deer will wander around seeking carrots. Males (bucks) have racks of antlers; females don't. Be



aware of little kids with the bucks; however, when they approached me and Eric, we had no difficulties.

### **Anything else?**

In Montebello, craft beer aficionados will want to visit Les Brasseurs de Montebello ([brasseursdemontebello.com/](http://brasseursdemontebello.com/) (<http://brasseursdemontebello.com/>)); buy Easter bunnies at ChocoMotive ([chocomotive.ca](http://chocomotive.ca)); find artisanal cheeses at [fromagerie-montebello.ca](http://fromagerie-montebello.ca)



## **Fultons Pancake House and Sugar Bush**

399 Sugar Bush Road, Pakenham, ON  
[fultons.ca](http://fultons.ca) ([fultons.ca](http://fultons.ca))

### **What's special?**

The Fulton family has lived here for more than 170 years and stewardship has been passed down through five generations.



Current owner Shirley Fulton-Duego told me, "My great grandfather came to Canada from Scotland and was granted 100 acres from the Crown. Each subsequent generation purchased more farm and bush land. I love it here and I have a strong feeling of connection and responsibility to the land."

### **What should I expect?**

A "typical sugar bush" with all the trimmings: Horse-drawn waggon rides; self-guided trails to explore through the bush (take cross-country skis); trail games for kids such as "I Spy" and the "Ultimate Challenge;" gift shop.

New this year is the "Walk Through Time" showing the evolution of sap gathering techniques.

### **Is there a restaurant on-site?**

A spacious restaurant serves all the pancakes and maple-inspired meals you could hope for.

### **What else is there to do?**

Check the website as there are many events. For instance, on March 21/22 there's the "Maple Run Studio Tour" so after you visit Fultons you can drive and see artists in their studios. April 7, 8 and 15, 16 enjoy your meal with "Irons in the Fire" Celtic band (11 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

### **Details, details**

Some activities are free, others have a fee. For instance, the horse-drawn sleigh ride is \$2.00 per person, as is Maple Taffy. Maple Cotton Candy is \$5, and face painting for kids is \$2 – \$5. If in doubt, ask if there's a fee.





Julia Foley at Temple's Sugar Bush. *TEMPLE'S SUGAR BUSH*

## Temple's Sugar Bush

1700 Ferguson's Falls Road,  
(County Road #15), Lanark ON

[templeessugarbush.ca/](http://templeessugarbush.ca/) (<http://www.templeessugarbush.ca/>)

### What's special?

The building itself is worth seeing, where many hardwood trees on the property that were damaged in the 1998 ice storm have been used. It's a post & beam construction where most timbers were fitted together using hand-made dowels. A central, efficient fireplace is based on the Rumfort design of the 1700s, and casts cozy warmth to the dining space.

The property was clearcut in the 1940s, but the McEwen family has recreated a healthy sugar bush.

### What should I expect?



The 70-acre sugar bush has 5,000 taps on thousands of maple trees. Wander the trails, look for animal tracks, take binoculars and search for denizens such as barred owls and deer.

### **Is there a restaurant on-site?**

The building houses an airy, bright restaurant serving scrumptious food. Not only four different types of pancakes, but breakfast sandwiches and other delights await, such as blueberry preserves, peameal bacon and so on. Excellent coffee.

### **What else is there to do?**

You can watch the maple syrup being made: it takes about 40 litres to sap to produce 1 litre of syrup, so it's time-consuming

The onsite shop sells all sorts of goodies, from maple sugar and butter to syrups.

### **Details, details**

It may be best to time your visit to afternoon. Contact Temple's to be sure, but please do be aware that meal lineups can be long and the wait lengthy.





## Maple in the County Festival (March 28, 29)

Prince Edward County

Various Locations

[mapleinthecounty.ca](http://mapleinthecounty.ca) (<http://mapleinthecounty.ca>)

### What's special?

This “destination” represents a group of sugar bush operations and events that group together for this annual maple-inspired festival. As well, individual sugarbushes are open at different times (check festival website) for visits.

PEC is special in itself: it is a distinctive heritage destination because other than Williamsburg in the USA, it boasts the second largest amount of Loyalist architecture (the Loyalist Parkway extends from Trenton to Kingston).

What should I expect?



Want something different if you stay overnight? Contact Waring House country inn ([waringhouse.com](http://waringhouse.com) (<http://waringhouse.com/>)) to see whether they have space in their maple-inspired, on-site cooking classes offered Sunday March 15 and 22.

### **Is there a restaurant on-site?**

Many of the sugar bushes have trails to explore as well as restaurants.

### **What else is there to do?**

Behind Waring House, find Honey Wagon Farm. The owners supply Waring House with farm-fresh produce throughout the year. What's more, the farm partners with the local fire department, where proceeds from their pancake breakfast go to this community service. Also, the department brings equipment out for everyone to see.

### **Details, details**

Other places to stay include Jacques Cottage and Maple Rest Heritage Home near Sandbanks Provincial Park ([ontarioparks.com/park/sandbanks](http://ontarioparks.com/park/sandbanks) ([ontarioparks.com/park/sandbanks](http://ontarioparks.com/park/sandbanks))). The former has a lovely view of Lake Ontario. (For information on the lodging check: [ontarioparks.com/roofedaccommodation/cottages/sandbanks-jacques-cottage](http://ontarioparks.com/roofedaccommodation/cottages/sandbanks-jacques-cottage) ([ontarioparks.com/roofedaccommodation/cottages/sandbanks-jacques-cottage](http://ontarioparks.com/roofedaccommodation/cottages/sandbanks-jacques-cottage)))

Want to wear off some sugary calories you may have consumed? Although Sandbanks is officially closed during winter, you can snowshoe or cross-country ski the trails and/or walk its beaches.

Katharine Fletcher is a freelance writer and author of such books as *Historical Walks: The Gatineau Park Story*. Visit her at [katharinefletcher.com](http://katharinefletcher.com)