Combine cranberries, maple syrup, brown sugar, cranberry juice, and lemon peel in heavy medium saucepan. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to low and simmer until most berries pop and juices thicken slightly, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to small bowl. Chill until cold, about 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and keep chilled.

MAPLE-PECAN SUNDAES WITH CANDIED BACON

PREP *30 minutes* **TOTAL** *50 minutes*
6 SERVINGS *Bacon and maple are a classic combination. Here, the dynamic flavor duo teams up in a sweet-and-salty maple sauce studded with caramelized bacon. The sauce is spooned over ice cream and sprinkled with toasted pecans to create the ultimate sundae. Serve any leftover sauce with pancakes or waffles.*

- **4 bacon slices**
- **2 tablespoons maple sugar, divided**
- **¾ cup pure maple syrup (preferably Grade B)**
- **2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half**
- **1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**
- **1 tablespoon finely chopped crystallized ginger**
- **½ cup pecan halves, toasted**
- **Vanilla ice cream**

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line rimmed baking sheet with foil. Place rack in center of foil. Lay bacon slices on rack. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon maple sugar evenly over bacon. Bake until sugar is melted, about 8 minutes. Sprinkle remaining 1 tablespoon sugar over same side of bacon. Bake until bacon is deep brown and glazed, 12 to 14 minutes longer. Remove from oven.

Preheat broiler. Broil bacon until sugar on top bubbles thickly, watching closely to prevent burning, 1 to 2 minutes. Cool bacon completely on rack. Cut into ¼-inch dice.

Combine maple syrup and cinnamon sticks in deep medium saucepan and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until sauce is thickened and reduced to ½ to ⅔ cup, about 5 minutes. Remove cinnamon sticks.

FOR COMPLETE **NUTRITIONAL INFO** FOR ALL OF THE RECIPES IN THIS ISSUE, GO TO *bonappetit.com/recipes*

Mix lemon juice and ginger into sauce. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Stir pecans and bacon into maple sauce. Scoop ice cream into dessert dishes. Spoon sauce over and serve.

MAPLE AND CHOCOLATE CHIP SHORTBREAD

PREP *25 minutes* **TOTAL** *2 hours (includes cooling time)*
MAKES 16 *These buttery cookies would be fantastic with a cup of tea.*

- **¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, plus additional for pan**
- **7 tablespoons finely ground maple sugar, divided**
- **¼ teaspoon coarse kosher salt**
- **1½ cups all purpose flour**
- **¼ cup (about) bittersweet chocolate chips**
- **2 teaspoons pure maple syrup (preferably Grade B)**

TEST-KITCHEN TIP If maple sugar is coarse, grind it in a food processor until it resembles granulated sugar.

Preheat oven to 300°F. Butter 9-inch-diameter tart pan with removable bottom. Using electric mixer, beat room-temperature butter, 6 tablespoons maple sugar, and coarse salt in large bowl until light and fluffy and sugar is dissolved. Add flour and beat just until blended. Pat dough evenly onto bottom of prepared pan. Press chocolate chips into dough in random pattern, spacing chips ½ inch apart (chips should show). Brush dough with maple syrup and sprinkle evenly with remaining 1 tablespoon maple sugar.

Bake shortbread until golden brown and firm to touch, about 55 minutes. Transfer pan to rack and cool shortbread 10 minutes. Gently push tart pan bottom up, releasing shortbread. Cut warm shortbread into 16 wedges. Cool shortbread wedges completely and serve.

Lori Longbotham is a New York–based recipe developer and the author of eight cookbooks. Her most recent is LUSCIOUS COCONUT DESSERTS.

Maple *Essentials*

Maple desserts can be tricky. The subtle taste of maple can be overwhelmed if the balance of ingredients isn't just right. To max out the flavor, our recipes call for maple sugar, Grade B maple syrup, and/or imitation maple extract. Here's all you need to know about these must-have ingredients.

MAPLE SUGAR

Twice as sweet as regular sugar, maple sugar is made by reducing maple syrup, cooling it, then stirring the syrup until tan, coarse crystals form. It's available at some supermarkets and at specialty foods stores and natural foods stores, or you can order it online from *kingarthurflour.com*.

GRADE B MAPLE SYRUP

This favorite pancake topper starts as the clear sap of the maple tree. The sap is boiled down to a syrup that's sold in four grades: Fancy (or AA), A, B, and C. The grades range from light in color and flavor (Fancy) to very dark and molasses-like (C). For baking, we prefer Grade B maple syrup, which is dark with a deep maple flavor. Look for it at specialty foods stores and natural foods stores, or buy it online from *dragonflysugarworks.com*.

IMITATION MAPLE EXTRACT

To intensify the maple flavor, we used imitation maple extract in a few of the recipes. Our first instinct was to reach for pure maple extract, but we found that it didn't provide the flavor boost we needed. Keep in mind that the extract should be used sparingly. Just a few drops will do the trick. Maple extract can be found in the baking aisle of many supermarkets.