

Have You Tried Maple Water Yet?

It's the latest in trendy thirst-quenching, poised to dethrone coconut water as the go-to revitalizer. Here's what you need to know before tapping in.

EVER SINCE COCONUT WATER ENTERED THE

vernacular a decade ago, Tetra Paks have been seen in the hands of lean, fit celebrities—Matthew McConaughey, Chris Pine, Rihanna, Alexa Chung—running to and from the gym. Now maple water, already a hit in Canada, is looking to move in on its territory. Similar to its predecessor, this natural drink is packed with electrolytes and potassium but has less than half the sugar (just 3 grams per 8 ounces to coconut water's 10). Still, studies have yet to back up maple water's health claims (It stops hangovers!) Here's what to consider about the next It sports drink.

THE NUTRITIONAL BREAKDOWN

The tonic has been a centuries-long staple among Native Americans and Koreans, who drink sap from the goro tree (a type of maple) as a springtime ritual, claiming it can help cure everything from nausea to high blood pressure. It seems they were on to something: Maple water contains 40-plus nutrients and minerals, from energy-boosting B vitamins to more manganese—key for fighting skin-dulling free radicals—than a cup of kale. "We're not creating a hot new ingre-

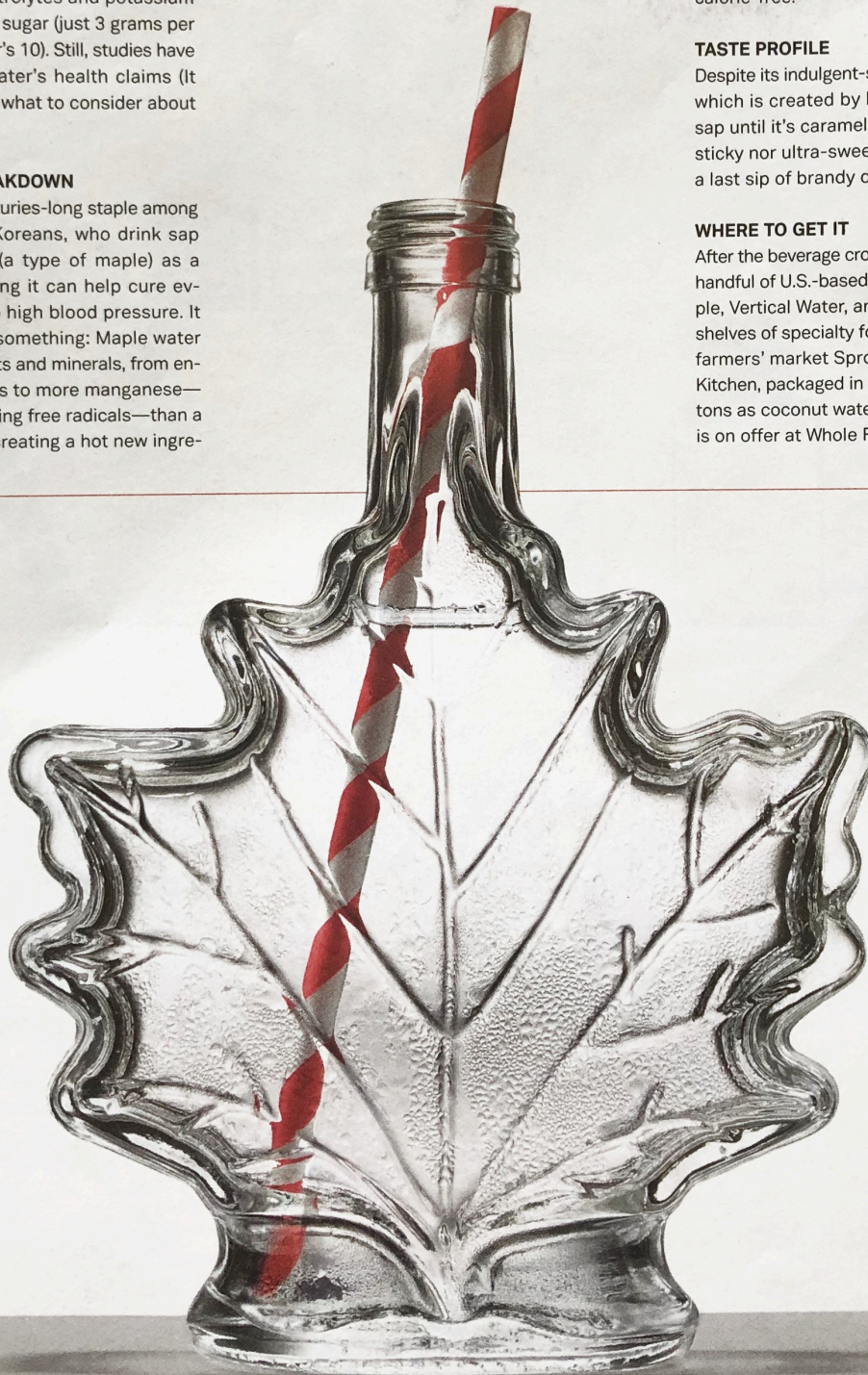
dient in a lab," says nutritionist and DRINKmaple cofounder Kate Weiler. "We're taking something from nature that's been used for years." Consider it the nutritious cousin of the Master Cleanse that stars have been endorsing for decades. But know it's not a perfect water substitute; the beverage contains about 30 calories, whereas plain H₂O is calorie-free.

TASTE PROFILE

Despite its indulgent-sounding name, unlike syrup, which is created by boiling copious amounts of sap until it's caramelized, maple water is neither sticky nor ultra-sweet. Its flavor is subtle—think a last sip of brandy diluted by melted ice cubes.

WHERE TO GET IT

After the beverage cropped up in Canada in 2013, a handful of U.S.-based brands, including DRINKmaple, Vertical Water, and BetterSweet, have hit the shelves of specialty food stores, like the franchise farmers' market Sprouts and New York City's Hu Kitchen, packaged in the same single-serving cartons as coconut water. A Canadian version, Seva, is on offer at Whole Foods.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF FAD DRINKS

1965

Gatorade

University of Florida researcher Robert Cade creates a sports drink to correct the electrolyte and sugar levels of the school's football players.

1996

Fiji water

The brand promotes its exotic methods of capturing H₂O, such as rain purification and volcanic filtration.

2000

Vitaminwater

Marketed to busy professionals as hydrating and healthy, it's called out in a 2010 class-action suit as a sugar bomb. Sales fall 18 percent by 2013.

2004

Coconut water

Vita Coco and Zico launch within weeks of each other, starting a turf war. Madonna and Red Hot Chili Peppers' Anthony Kiedis invest in the former; Kevin Garnett and Jessica Alba back the latter.

2012

Cold-pressed juice

Liquid raw fruits and veggies become a \$5 billion business, with artisanal purveyors and even Starbucks eventually getting a piece of the pie.

2014

Maple water

The beverage hits U.S. stores, after success in Canada: The first two brands to market had to triple initial production orders.