

# YUMMY NORTHWEST

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## MAPLE BARS RULE THE NORTHWEST!

**Cookbook author** Jill Van Cleave calls maple bars “a specialty item of bakeries in the Pacific Northwest.” Is this true? No one can tell me for sure.

My friend in Vermont tells me they have maple bars there, so these doughnuts are not unique to this region. Still, we have some mighty good ones to sample, and I highly recommend you treat yourself occasionally.

### A Trip Thru Donut Land

Accompanied by friend Dhoee, I set out one Saturday morning to sample maple bars in the Puget Sound area. Many places were recommended, and all the maple bars were certainly delightful in their way.

As pointed out in the *Cupcake Café Cookbook*: “In truth, even a mediocre doughnut is pretty good as long as it’s still warm.”

We weren’t completely fair to some as we arrived after the maple bars had long cooled, but Dhoee and I hope our valiant effort to eat each one with an uncritical palate will pay off by encouraging you to get out to a local bakery to try them for yourself.

### DOUGHNUTS AS HEALTH FOOD

TO FRY PROPERLY, DOUGHNUT BATTER CAN BE NEITHER TOO SWEET NOR TOO RICH. ALL THAT SUGARY STUFF IS ADDED *AFTER* THE DOUGHNUT IS FRIED, AND YOU DON’T HAVE TO ADD IT AT ALL. AND WHILE I GRANT THERE IS NO GETTING AROUND THE FACT THAT A DOUGHNUT IS A FRIED FOOD, IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT, ONCE FRIED, THE DAMAGE STOPS – FEW DOUGHNUT EATERS PUT BUTTER OR CREAM CHEESE ON THEIR DOUGHNUTS.

THE CUPCAKE CAFÉ  
COOKBOOK BY ANN WARREN  
AND JOAN LILLY

OOOOOOOOOO

#### Did you know?

Elvis Presley made only one TV commercial – an ad for “Southern Maid Doughnuts” that ran in 1954.

Americans eat an estimated 10 billion doughnuts every year.

When viewed from above, rainbows are doughnut-shaped.

**Family Donut**  
2100 N. Northgate Way, Seattle  
(206) 368-9107

Good frosting coverage on this bar, with adequate maple flavor. We sampled a blond bar, lighter than any we’d seen elsewhere. “Springy,” according to Dhoee. This was like bread you’d make at home. Not our favorite, but worth eating when you’re in the neighborhood.

**Krispy Kreme**  
6210 E. Lake Sammamish Parkway S.E.,  
Issaquah  
(425) 391-8011

When I checked for a maple bar, I found they take their standard glazed doughnut and dip the top in a maple glaze. Somehow I think this is cheating – and sheer laziness – to merely recycle a product. I recommend taking your business to any local bakery that makes the effort to produce what everyone can recognize as a real maple bar. Even if you do not buy the maple bar, you want to get a doughnut from someone who knows what one is.



**A real maple bar.**

**Madison Park Bakery**  
4214 E. Madison St., Seattle  
(206) 322-3238

These “world famous” (having traveled to Ireland and Latvia) maple bars are still my favorite. They look homemade, thick yeasty

rectangles lavishly topped with what I call “real frosting” (most other maple bars tested sported a glaze of varying intensity). Owner Terry Hofman says he makes his own frosting, flavored with Mapleine, instead of getting it out of a bucket like many places do. Dhoe agreed these were good but said their heartiness might be better appreciated if you are eating them as your breakfast.

**Mighty O's Donuts**  
**2110 N. 55<sup>th</sup> St., Seattle**  
**(206) 547-0335**

I knew I wouldn't find maple bars here but had to include this place in the taste tour because I don't think there is any other place in town that makes fresh, organic, vegan doughnuts. So what a wonderful surprise to find the French Toast doughnut, an old-fashioned with a maple glaze sprinkled with cinnamon. Just the right amount of crunch and very satisfying for something that is not a maple bar.

**Sophie's**  
**2238 Eastlake Ave. E., Seattle**  
**(206) 323-7132**

It's fun to stand in line here. On the wall are charming photos of dogs commenting on how great Sophie's doughnuts are. (Sophie is herself a dog.) Then, of course, you notice the display case filled with beautifully decorated delights. Owner Susan Kaplan obviously has fun creating food. All recipes are from somewhere in the past, making the taste more down-to-earth rather than fluffy. Dhoe thought the maple bars were light, not filling. The maple taste lingered but was not overpowering.

**Top Food and Drug**  
**Various locations**

Don't disregard doughnuts found in grocery stores, certainly not those at Top Food and Drug. These are delicious even when not fresh out of the oil. Thick and chewy, plenty of glaze, worth stopping for any time of day.

**Top Pot**  
**609 Summit Ave. E., Seattle**  
**(206) 323-7841**

Who could resist any doughnut sold in a cozy café lined with shelves of books? The “hand-forged” selection includes such treats

## Amazing Glaze

I believe that a perfect balance of maple and doughnut is what brings real joy to the experience of eating maple bars. Try this recipe for a more natural glaze; if the maple flavor isn't satisfactory, add a bit of Mapleine or any maple flavoring.

1 ½ cups  
 confectioners' sugar  
 1/3 cup pure maple  
 syrup  
 1 ½ tablespoons  
 heavy cream

While the doughnuts are rising, prepare the glaze. Stir the confectioners' sugar and maple syrup together in a bowl. Add the cream and whisk until the mixture is smoothly blended, with a thick, spreadable consistency. Cover and set aside while the doughnuts fry.

*From The Neighborhood Bake Shop by Jill Van Cleave, where you can also get the entire maple bar recipe.*



as raspberry old-fashioned and pink boas (topped with fluffy coconut). The maple bars are substantial but surprisingly light. “Almost a pastry rather than a doughnut,” was Dhoe's comment. She thought these would be the perfect complement to a cup of coffee for a satisfying snack.

**Winchell's Donut House**  
**211 N.E. 45<sup>th</sup> St., Seattle**  
**(206) 633-4221**

As a child, I lived down the street, and it was quite a treat to get a dozen warm doughnuts here. But Dhoe and I were saddened to see them so stingy with the maple glaze. We had to take very large bites to get near it. This is not right, as maple glaze cannot be their biggest budget item. On top of that (or rather, below it!), the bar itself was tasteless. We are not picky eaters, but Dhoe and I agreed we wouldn't need to buy another one soon.

**Chuck's Donuts**  
**3172 N.E. Sunset Blvd., Renton**  
**(425) 271-2399**

A last-minute entry for the taste test, Chuck's provides a singularly most delicious frosting experience – made with real butter, piled on thick and with rustic spirit. These maple bars are worth a trip to Renton. Be sure to pick up your card for a free game of bowling while you're in the store.



I can't complete this topic without urging you to read (or reread) the memorable “Doughnuts” chapter in *Homer Price* by Robert McCloskey. Homer learns what to do with *too many* doughnuts. A lesson we should all pay attention to.

## About YUMMY NORTHWEST

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

## Contact the editor

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