

Marketers deliver the world of make-believe food

By Andrew Martin, Bloomberg Businessweek

Log Cabin All Natural Table Syrup has no artificial flavors or colors, nor does it contain preservatives or high-fructose corn syrup. It's sold in a traditional jug similar to those used by many Vermont maple sugar makers, complete with a picture of a snow-covered log cabin on the label evoking the woods of the Green Mountain State.

But while Log Cabin All Natural Table Syrup may indeed be "natural" and "authentic," as the jug suggests, it isn't maple syrup, despite the best efforts of its marketers to suggest otherwise. (The top ingredients are brown rice syrup, water, and sugar.)

It's just one example of a marketing trend that's quickly transforming the nation's grocery aisles. Consumers are clamoring for food that's simple, less processed, and genuine. Companies are rushing to oblige them by reformulating products or labeling them in a way that evokes verdant farmland and authenticity.

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