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<u>**New England Apple and Bacon Griddlecakes**</u>
(Makes 4 servings)

While it might seem logical to use maple-cured or smoked bacon for this homey recipe, I find that if you use pure maple syrup to pour over the griddlecakes—and the difference between a genuine amber Grade B syrup and the virtually mapleless commercial table syrup product is truly astonishing—the overall maple effect is just too intense. Better to go with a mellow apple-smoked artisanal bacon, which only slightly intensifies the flavor of the apples themselves while adding a subtle smokiness to the batter. There's also nothing wrong with using a mildly peppered bacon for an altogether different effect.

1/2 pound applewood-smoked bacon
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 large eggs
1/2 cup whole milk
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled and coarsely grated
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter, melted, plus extra for serving
Pure maple syrup (preferably Grade B)

In a large skillet, fry the bacon till crisp, drain on paper towels, and crumble.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon and stir till well blended. In another bowl, whisk together the eggs and milk, add to the flour mixture, and stir till the batter is just blended. Stir in the apples and bacon.

Heat a griddle or large, heavy skillet over moderately high heat till hot and brush it with butter. Drop the batter by 1/4-cup measures onto the griddle and cook till bubbles appear on the surface and the edges begin to brown, about 2 minutes. Turn with a spatula and cook till golden, about 1 minute longer. Transfer the griddlecakes to a platter, keep warm in a low oven, and continue to make more griddlecakes in the same manner. Serve hot with butter and maple syrup.