

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Charles County

Maryland · La Plata · FIPS 24017 · Population 167,035 ·
Crosodo Index #2316*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE
MD COMAR 10.15.03.27	Good	50000	MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED
2026-05-05

IMPORTANT — NOT LEGAL ADVICE

This report compiles publicly-available statutes, regulations, and county zoning rules into a research reference. It is **not legal advice** and is provided **without warranty** as to accuracy, completeness, or current applicability.

Cottage food law changes frequently. Counties may amend zoning, health departments may issue new permits, and state legislatures may update statutes after the publication date shown above.

Always verify rules directly with your state department of health/agriculture and your county health and planning offices before relying on them for any business or regulatory decision. Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.

MARYLAND: CHARLES COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2316* · FIPS 24017 · La Plata

Charles County

Population 167,035 · State baseline: MD COMAR 10.15.03.27 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Annual revenue cap \$50,000. Non-PHF foods only — no acidified foods, pickles, salsas, ketchup, mustard, or fermented foods. Inspections upon complaint only. Optional free registration unless selling at retail stores. Food handler cert recommended; required if selling at retail stores.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No explicit state restriction; MDH guidelines address sanitation.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Charles County may require home occupation permit for home-based businesses. Charles County government website confirmed at charlescountymd.gov. La Plata city has separate municipal zoning. Local zoning contact should be verified.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (Inspections only upon complaint or illness report.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Annual revenue cap \$50,000. Non-PHF foods only — no acidified foods, pickles, salsas, ketchup, mustard, or fermented foods. Inspections upon complaint only. Optional free registration unless selling at retail stores. Food handler cert recommended; required if selling at retail stores.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No explicit state restriction; MDH guidelines address sanitation.
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water supply required.
HANDWASHING	Adequate handwashing per MDH guidelines.
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable storage; no refrigerated products.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — Inspections only upon complaint or illness report.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Charles County may require home occupation permit for home-based businesses. Charles County government website confirmed at charlescountymd.gov. La Plata city has separate municipal zoning. Local zoning contact should be verified.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales at home, online within Maryland, limited retail store sales with food safety training.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Household members only for standard home occupation.

Relevant county code

MD COMAR 10.15.03.27; Charles County zoning ordinance (home occupations)

RESEARCH NOTES

Charles County government website confirmed at [charlescountymd.gov](https://www.charlescountymd.gov). No county-specific cottage food ordinance found beyond state baseline. Maryland DOH FAQ (September 2025) confirms no state license required. Maryland's \$50,000 cap and prohibition on acidified foods are key restrictions.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.charlescountymd.gov>

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/OFPCS/Pages/Cottage-Food.aspx>

<https://regs.maryland.gov/us/md/exec/comar/10.15.03.27>

Questions? Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss your county's specific zoning rules at <https://crosodo.com/nb/maryland/charles-county-discuss>

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Charles County	St. Mary's County	Calvert County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No explicit state restriction; MDH guidelines address sanitation.	No specific state restriction; standard food safety sanitation practices apply.	No specific restriction under Maryland cottage food law.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales at home, online within Maryland, limited retail store sales with food safety training.	Maryland allows direct sales and limited indirect retail sales (requires food handler cert for retail channel). Online and mail order prohi...	Direct and limited indirect sales. Retail stores allowed with optional registration. Online/mail order within Maryland. No out-of-state sal...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Varies	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Annual revenue cap \$50,000. Non-PHF foods only — no acidified foods, pickles, salsas, ketchup, mustard, or fermented foods. Inspections upo...	Maryland allows non-PHF cottage foods from residential kitchen. \$50,000 annual revenue cap. Registration (free online ID) optional unless s...	Maryland cottage food law (COMAR 10.15.03.27): \$50,000 annual sales cap. No routine inspection (complaint-based only). Registration optiona...
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable storage; no refrigerated products.	Non-PHF shelf-stable products only. No refrigerated or TCS foods. Acidified foods, fermented foods, pickles, salsas prohibited. Separate On...	Non-PHF shelf-stable foods only. Prohibited: acidified foods, fermented foods, TCS foods.
POPULATION	167,035	113,814	93,244

State context — Maryland cottage food law

Charles County’s rules sit on top of Maryland’s state cottage food framework. The state law sets the floor — counties can add but cannot remove protections.

<p>STATUTE MD COMAR 10.15.03.27</p> <p>REGISTRATION REQUIRED Depends</p> <p>KITCHEN INSPECTION Upon-complaint</p> <p>INDIRECT SALES Limited (see notes) — Sales at retail food stores (indirect) are allowed but require prior submission of labels and documentation of ANSI-accredited food safety course completion to the Maryland Department of Health before any retail sales can commence. The Department must notify the producer in writing that requirements are met before retail sales begin.</p>	<p>ANNUAL SALES CAP 50000</p> <p>FOOD HANDLER CERT Recommended</p> <p>DIRECT SALES ONLY No</p>
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For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Maryland cottage food law report](#).

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://regs.maryland.gov/us/md/exec/comar/10.15.03.27>

State dept cottage food page: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/OFPCHS/Pages/Cottage-Food.aspx>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/maryland/>

Questions?

Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss Charles County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

<https://crosodo.com/nb/maryland/charles-county-discuss>
