

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Carter County

Missouri · Van Buren · FIPS 29035 · Population 5,359 ·
Crosodo Index #903*

STATE BASELINE

Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298

STATE TIER

Great

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

2026-05-06

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.

MISSOURI: CARTER COUNTY

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Carter County

Population 5,359 · State baseline: Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Missouri state law (§196.298) permits home kitchen production of nonperishable baked goods, canned jams and jellies, and dried herbs and herb mixes. Direct-to-consumer sales only (including online/in-state shipping as of 2022 amendment). State law expressly prohibits local health departments from regulating cottage food production (§196.298(3)(1)). No sales cap, no registration, no food handler cert required.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No explicit state-level pet restriction for cottage food operations under Missouri law. Standard sanitation practices recommended.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Carter County does not appear to have county-wide zoning. Van Buren (county seat, very small community on the Current River) may have limited city zoning. No county-specific cottage food overlay identified. Many unincorporated areas have no applicable home occupation rules.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (Missouri law expressly bars local health departments from regulating cottage food production (§196.298(3)(1)). No routine inspections.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Missouri state law (§196.298) permits home kitchen production of nonperishable baked goods, canned jams and jellies, and dried herbs and herb mixes. Direct-to-consumer sales only (including online/in-state shipping as of 2022 amendment). State law expressly prohibits local health departments from regulating cottage food production (§196.298(3)(1)). No sales cap, no registration, no food handler cert required.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No explicit state-level pet restriction for cottage food operations under Missouri law. Standard sanitation practices recommended.
WATER SUPPLY	No specific water testing requirement for Missouri cottage food operations.
HANDWASHING	Standard handwashing per GMP; no specific statutory requirement for cottage food.
FOOD STORAGE	Products must be properly stored to prevent contamination. No state-mandated specific storage requirements for cottage food.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — Missouri law expressly bars local health departments from regulating cottage food production (§196.298(3)(1)). No routine inspections.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Carter County does not appear to have county-wide zoning. Van Buren (county seat, very small community on the Current River) may have limited city zoning. No county-specific cottage food overlay identified. Many unincorporated areas have no applicable home occupation rules.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Missouri cottage food law allows direct-to-consumer sales from home, online (in-state shipping as of 2022), and at events/farmers markets. Home pickup permitted. No sales through restaurants or retail stores under §196.298.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified by Missouri state cottage food law.

Relevant county code

Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298; Van Buren city zoning ordinance

RESEARCH NOTES

Very rural southeastern Missouri Ozarks county (one of Missouri’s least populous, ~6,000 residents; borders Arkansas). Missouri state baseline governs; no Carter County-specific cottage food ordinance found. Most of the county is unincorporated forest/Ozark National Scenic Riverways land. State prohibits local health departments from regulating cottage food production.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.cartercountymo.org>

<https://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/cottagefood.php>

<https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=196.298>

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

State context — Missouri cottage food law

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

STATUTE Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298	ANNUAL SALES CAP —
REGISTRATION REQUIRED No	FOOD HANDLER CERT No
KITCHEN INSPECTION No	DIRECT SALES ONLY Yes

INDIRECT SALES
No — Under §196.298, sales must be directly to consumers from the producer’s home. Events, farmers markets, restaurants, retail stores, and roadside stands are not permitted under this law. Internet/online sales are allowed but only if both the producer and buyer are located in Missouri. Local health departments are explicitly prohibited from regulating the production of food at cottage food operations. A separate Missouri statute (individual stands law) allows sales at events and roadside stands in counties that have adopted it, permitting most other nonperishable foods.

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Missouri cottage food law report](#).

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=196.298>

State dept cottage food page: <https://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/cottagefood.php>

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

Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/missouri/carter-county-discuss>
