

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Chouteau County

Montana · Fort Benton · FIPS 30015 · Population 5,880 ·
Crosodo Index #744*

STATE BASELINE

Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq.
(Local Food Choice Act)

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Freedom	—	MEDIUM	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.

MONTANA: CHOUTEAU COUNTY

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Chouteau County

Population 5,880 · State baseline: Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq. (Local Food Choice Act) · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code §50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under standard cottage food track (§50-50-116). Products sold direct-to-consumer at farmers markets, events, and from home; no consignment/retail/wholesale. The Montana Local Food Choice Act (Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq.) provides an additional pathway for direct producer-to-consumer sales of virtually any homemade food without licensing or inspection requirements, provided the sale is in-state and consumers are informed the food is unlicensed and uninspected. No sales cap under either track.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (No specific Chouteau County cottage food or home occupation rules found. City of Fort Benton may have business license requirements. Recommend verifying with Chouteau County planning/zoning department.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (No routine inspection under standard cottage food law. Local health authority access may be granted upon complaint. Under MLFCA track, no inspection required.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code §50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under standard cottage food track (§50-50-116). Products sold direct-to-consumer at farmers markets, events, and from home; no consignment/retail/wholesale. The Montana Local Food Choice Act (Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq.) provides an additional pathway for direct producer-to-consumer sales of virtually any homemade food without licensing or inspection requirements, provided the sale is in-state and consumers are informed the food is unlicensed and uninspected. No sales cap under either track.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.

WATER SUPPLY

Not specified in state cottage food law.

HANDWASHING

Standard food safety sanitation practices required; products must comply with applicable food standards.

FOOD STORAGE

Products must be non-potentially hazardous (standard cottage food track) or properly disclosed as unlicensed/uninspected (MLFCA track). Proper storage to prevent contamination required.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — No routine inspection under standard cottage food law. Local health authority access may be granted upon complaint. Under MLFCA track, no inspection required.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — No specific Chouteau County cottage food or home occupation rules found. City of Fort Benton may have business license requirements. Recommend verifying with Chouteau County planning/zoning department.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted at farmers markets, events, and from home. Under standard cottage food (§50-50-116), no consignment, retail, or wholesale sales. Under MLFCA, any direct producer-to-consumer in-state transaction is permissible if consumer is informed food is unlicensed/uninspected.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified in state cottage food law.

Relevant county code

Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq. (Local Food Choice Act)

RESEARCH NOTES

No county-specific cottage food or home occupation ordinances found for Chouteau County. Fort Benton is the historic birthplace of Montana. Governance follows state law. Recommend verifying with Chouteau County Planning and local health department for any local registration or business license requirements.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.chouteaucounty.gov>

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/fcs/foodsafety/cottagefoods>

https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0500/chapter_0500/part_0010/section_0160/0500-0500-0010-0160.html

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Chouteau County	Blaine County	Fergus County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.	Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.	Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted at farmers markets, events, and from home. Under standard cottage food (§50-50-116), no consignment, ret...	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted at farmers markets, events, and from home. Under standard cottage food (§50-50-116), no consignment, ret...	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted at farmers markets, events, and from home. Under standard cottage food (§50-50-116), no consignment, ret...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code §50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under s...	Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code §50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under s...	Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code §50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under s...
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POPULATION	5,897	7,030	11,496

State context — Montana cottage food law

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

STATUTE

Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq. (Local Food Choice Act)

ANNUAL SALES CAP

—

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

FOOD HANDLER CERT

No

KITCHEN INSPECTION

Upon-complaint

DIRECT SALES ONLY

Yes

INDIRECT SALES

No — Consignment sales at retail food establishments or through wholesale establishments are explicitly prohibited under §50-50-116(3). The Montana Local Food Choice Act also requires direct producer-to-informed-end-consumer transactions only; retail locations require a wholesale food license.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0500/chapter_0500/part_0010/section_0160/0500-0500-0010-0160.html

State dept cottage food page: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/fcs/foodsafety/cottagefoods>

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

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/montana/chouteau-county-discuss>

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Chouteau County, Montana. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours free on the Crosodo Forum.

crosodo.com/nb/montana/chouteau-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

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