

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Hamilton County

Tennessee · Chattanooga · FIPS 47065 · Population 367,193 ·
Crosodo Index #430*

STATE BASELINE

Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act)

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

HIGH

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.

TENNESSEE: HAMILTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #430* · FIPS 47065 · Chattanooga

Hamilton County

Population 367,193 · State baseline: Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act) · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, effective July 1, 2022) allows any non-TCS homemade food from private residence without permit, registration, or inspection. No sales cap. Online sales and shipping within Tennessee permitted. Farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, and events all allowed. No prescribed approved foods list — all non-TCS foods permitted. Labels must disclose homemade nature and contact info.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state restriction; standard food safety practices apply.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Hamilton County requires a county business license from County Clerk for businesses grossing over \$3,000 annually. Standard business license for gross receipts over \$10,000. Contact Hamilton County Clerk for business license. If opening food establishment, health department contact required, but cottage food is exempt. Chattanooga and other incorporated cities may have separate zoning home occupation requirements.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (No inspection required or permitted under Tennessee Food Freedom Act.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, effective July 1, 2022) allows any non-TCS homemade food from private residence without permit, registration, or inspection. No sales cap. Online sales and shipping within Tennessee permitted. Farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, and events all allowed. No prescribed approved foods list — all non-TCS foods permitted. Labels must disclose homemade nature and contact info.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific state restriction; standard food safety practices apply.
WATER SUPPLY	No specific state requirement.
HANDWASHING	No specific state requirement; standard food safety practices recommended.
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS products only. No foods requiring time/temperature control for safety.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No inspection required or permitted under Tennessee Food Freedom Act.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Hamilton County requires a county business license from County Clerk for businesses grossing over \$3,000 annually. Standard business license for gross receipts over \$10,000. Contact Hamilton County Clerk for business license. If opening food establishment, health department contact required, but cottage food is exempt. Chattanooga and other incorporated cities may have separate zoning home occupation requirements.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	All sales channels allowed within Tennessee: direct-to-consumer, farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online with in-state shipping. No interstate sales.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified in state Food Freedom Act.

Relevant county code

Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act); Hamilton County Business License requirements (Tennessee Business Tax Act, TCA 67-4-712).

RESEARCH NOTES

Tennessee Food Freedom Act confirmed from official TN.gov source. Hamilton County business license requirement confirmed from official hamiltontn.gov starting business page. Tennessee Food Freedom Act is one of the most permissive — no registration, no permit, no inspection, no sales cap, no approved foods list. Business grossing over \$3,000 needs county business license. TN DOA contact for questions: NewFood.Business@tn.gov or 615-837-5193. Confidence high: both state law and county business license requirement confirmed from .gov sources.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.hamiltontn.gov>

<https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/consumers/food-safety/tennessee-food-freedom-act.html>

<https://www.hamiltontn.gov/StartingBusiness.aspx>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Hamilton County	Bradley County	Bledsoe County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state restriction; standard food safety practices apply.	No specific state restriction in the Food Freedom Act.	No specific pet restriction in state law; standard food safety hygiene practices apply.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	All sales channels allowed within Tennessee: direct-to-consumer, farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online with in-s...	All sales channels permitted for non-TCS foods: direct-to-consumer, online, wholesale, retail, delivery. No sales cap.	Broad — direct and indirect sales permitted. Online, in-person, delivery, farmers markets, retail stores all allowed under Tennessee Food F...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Conditional	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, effective July 1, 2022) allows any non-TCS homemade food from private residence without p...	Tennessee’s Food Freedom Act (eff. July 1, 2022) broadly deregulates non-TCS homemade food. No license, permit, inspection, or labeling req...	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, effective July 1, 2022) broadly allows any non-TCS homemade food from a private residence...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS products only. No foods requiring time/temperature control for safety.	Non-TCS foods only. TCS foods (requiring time/temperature control for safety) are not covered and require standard food establishment licen...	No specific state cottage food storage requirement; non-TCS foods must be stored appropriately.
POPULATION	367,193	108,859	14,816

State context — Tennessee cottage food law

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

STATUTE Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act)	ANNUAL SALES CAP —
REGISTRATION REQUIRED No	FOOD HANDLER CERT No
KITCHEN INSPECTION No	DIRECT SALES ONLY No

INDIRECT SALES
 Yes — The Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Public Chapter 862, effective July 1, 2022) broadly exempts production and sale of non-TCS homemade food items from all licensing, permitting, inspecting, packaging, and labeling laws. Sales may be direct to consumer in person or remotely. Local government ordinances restricting homemade food sales are preempted. Note: Prior to the 2022 Food Freedom Act, the older domestic kitchen regulations (TDA Chapter 0080-4-11) required a permit, inspection, and food safety certification, and limited sales to 100 units/week; the Food Freedom Act supersedes these requirements for qualifying non-TCS homemade foods.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/2021/title-53/chapter-8/>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/businesses/food/food-manufacturing/domestic-kitchen.html>

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

Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/tennessee/hamilton-county-discuss>
