

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Knox County

Tennessee · Knoxville · FIPS 47093 · Population 481,406 ·
Crosodo Index #656*

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: KNOX COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #656* · FIPS 47093 · Knoxville

Knox County

Population 481,406 · State baseline: Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act) · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Non-TCS foods only (do not require temperature control for safety). No registration required. No inspection required. Food may be sold directly to consumers, at farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, and online within Tennessee.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state cottage food pet restriction in Tennessee Food Freedom Act

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (Knox County Home Occupation Permit required per Knox County Zoning Section 4.90. Application through Knox County Department of Code Administration (return to Knox County Code Administration, Knoxville TN 37902). Requirements: (A) Only household members may be engaged; (B) max 25% floor area; (C) no change to exterior appearance, no outdoor storage except vehicles; (D) no accessory building; (E) sales only of products produced on premises; (F) no excessive traffic or parking; (G) no detectable off-premises noise/vibration/glare/odors; (H) no electrical interference off premises. Permitted home occupations include: 'H. Cooking and preserving.' Signs: only allowed in RA, RB, PR zones at 2 sq ft maximum nameplate.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (No inspection required under Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, effective July 1, 2022))

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Non-TCS foods only (do not require temperature control for safety). No registration required. No inspection required. Food may be sold directly to consumers, at farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, and online within Tennessee.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific state cottage food pet restriction in Tennessee Food Freedom Act
WATER SUPPLY	No specific water testing requirement in state cottage food law
HANDWASHING	No specific requirement in state cottage food law
FOOD STORAGE	Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No inspection required under Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, effective July 1, 2022)
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — Knox County Home Occupation Permit required per Knox County Zoning Section 4.90. Application through Knox County Department of Code Administration (return to Knox County Code Administration, Knoxville TN 37902). Requirements: (A) Only household members may be engaged; (B) max 25% floor area; (C) no change to exterior appearance, no outdoor storage except vehicles; (D) no accessory building; (E) sales only of products produced on premises; (F) no excessive traffic or parking; (G) no detectable off-premises noise/vibration/glare/odors; (H) no electrical interference off premises. Permitted home occupations include: 'H. Cooking and preserving.' Signs: only allowed in RA, RB, PR zones at 2 sq ft maximum nameplate.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales to consumers within Tennessee: home, farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online with in-state shipping. No annual sales cap. No out-of-state sales.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Knox County Zoning Section 4.90: only household members residing on premises may be engaged

Relevant county code

Knox County Zoning Ordinance Section 4.90 (Home Occupations). State: Tenn. Code §53-1-125.

RESEARCH NOTES

Knox County Home Occupation Permit PDF retrieved directly from knoxcounty.org. Section 4.90 explicitly lists 'H. Cooking and preserving' as a permitted home occupation. Only household members may work; 25% floor area limit; no exterior storage; no sales except products produced on premises; no excessive traffic. Sign: 2 sq ft nameplate in RA/RB/PR zones. Tennessee Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, eff. July 1, 2022) retrieved from tn.gov. No state registration, inspection, or cap required. All venues permitted. Confidence high: both official Knox County and state TN sources retrieved.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.knoxcounty.org>

https://www.knoxcounty.org/codes/pdfs/construction_info/home_occupation.pdf

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

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Knox County	Blount County	Sevier County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state cottage food pet restriction in Tennessee Food Freedom Act	Not prohibited by state statute.	No state restriction.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales to consumers within Tennessee: home, farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online with in-state shipping. ...	Sales permitted from home, farmers markets, events, online, retail stores, and restaurants. No geographic restrictions within Tennessee. Th...	Direct and indirect sales allowed under Tennessee Food Freedom Act. Farmers markets, online sales, home pickup, and events all permitted.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Non-TCS foods only (do not require temperature control for safety). No registration required. No inspection required. Food may be sold dire...	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (2022) broadly deregulates non-TCS homemade food production and sales. No licensing, permit, inspection, or labe...	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (§53-1-125, eff. July 1, 2022) broadly deregulates non-TCS homemade food. No license, permit, registration, or i...
FOOD STORAGE	Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods	Non-TCS foods only; stored in food-safe containers.	Non-TCS homemade foods only.
POPULATION	481,406	135,951	98,455

State context — Tennessee cottage food law

Knox 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 Knox County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

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