

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Putnam County

Tennessee · Cookeville · FIPS 47141 · Population 80,157 ·
Crosodo Index #2108*

STATE BASELINE

Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Tennessee Food Freedom Act, effective July 1, 2022; 2025 amendment expands to include certain TCS foods)

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Good	—	MEDIUM	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: PUTNAM COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2108* · FIPS 47141 · Cookeville

Putnam County

Population 80,157 · State baseline: Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Tennessee Food Freedom Act, effective July 1, 2022; 2025 amendment expands to include certain TCS foods) · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Must be produced at a private residence. Non-TCS foods allowed without license or permit. As of 2025 amendment, most TCS foods also allowed but must be sold in-person or by an agent of the producer directly to the consumer. Cannot use commercial kitchen, restaurant, church kitchen, or community kitchen.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not specified in state law. Good sanitary practices expected.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (The Tennessee Food Freedom Act removes state-level licensing and permit requirements. Local zoning ordinances may apply. Putnam County does not appear to have a specific cottage food ordinance overriding state law. Verify with Putnam County and the City of Cookeville for any home occupation permit requirements.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (Tennessee DOH or TDA may investigate upon complaint of foodborne illness or food safety concern. No routine inspection required.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Must be produced at a private residence. Non-TCS foods allowed without license or permit. As of 2025 amendment, most TCS foods also allowed but must be sold in-person or by an agent of the producer directly to the consumer. Cannot use commercial kitchen, restaurant, church kitchen, or community kitchen.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Not specified in state law. Good sanitary practices expected.
WATER SUPPLY	Residential potable water supply required.
HANDWASHING	Good sanitary practices recommended; not explicitly mandated in the Food Freedom Act for non-TCS foods.
FOOD STORAGE	Not specified beyond general good food safety practices. TCS foods must be handled with appropriate temperature controls.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — Tennessee DOH or TDA may investigate upon complaint of foodborne illness or food safety concern. No routine inspection required.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — The Tennessee Food Freedom Act removes state-level licensing and permit requirements. Local zoning ordinances may apply. Putnam County does not appear to have a specific cottage food ordinance overriding state law. Verify with Putnam County and the City of Cookeville for any home occupation permit requirements.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Products may be sold at farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online with in-state shipping, and from the producer’s home. TCS foods must be sold in person or by an agent; no third-party online platforms for TCS foods. Sales within Tennessee only.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	No employee restriction specified in state cottage food law.

Relevant county code

No county-specific cottage food ordinance found.

RESEARCH NOTES

Tennessee’s Food Freedom Act (Tenn. Code §53-1-125, eff. July 1, 2022) was significantly expanded in 2025 to include most TCS foods. The Act removes state-level licensing/permit/inspection requirements for cottage foods. No Putnam County-specific overrides found. State law preempts local interference with allowable sales channels. Local zoning may require home occupation compliance. Confidence: medium (state law verified, no county-specific ordinance confirmed).

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

- <https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/consumers/food-safety/tennessee-food-freedom-act.html>
- <https://utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/PB1909.pdf>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Putnam County	Cumberland County	DeKalb County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not specified in state law. Good sanitary practices expected.	No specific pet restriction in state law; standard food safety hygiene practices apply.	No specific pet restriction in state law; standard food safety hygiene practices apply.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Products may be sold at farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online with in-state shipping, and from the producer's ho...	Broad — direct and indirect sales permitted. Online, in-person, delivery, farmers markets, retail stores all allowed under Tennessee Food F...	Broad — direct and indirect sales permitted. Online, in-person, delivery, farmers markets, retail stores all allowed under Tennessee Food F...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Must be produced at a private residence. Non-TCS foods allowed without license or permit. As of 2025 amendment, most TCS foods also allowed...	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (effective July 1, 2022) broadly allows any non-TCS homemade food from a private residence. No license, permit, ...	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	Not specified beyond general good food safety practices. TCS foods must be handled with appropriate temperature controls.	No specific state cottage food storage requirement; non-TCS foods must be stored appropriately.	No specific state cottage food storage requirement; non-TCS foods must be stored appropriately.
POPULATION	80,157	61,552	20,209

State context — Tennessee cottage food law

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

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