

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Rutherford County

Tennessee · Murfreesboro · FIPS 47149 · Population 343,727
· Crosodo Index #929*

STATE BASELINE

Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act); no registration, no inspection, no sales cap;
home kitchen allowed; direct and indirect sales

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: RUTHERFORD COUNTY

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Rutherford County

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QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Non-TCS foods only; label required; no state permit or inspection; produced at producer’s private residence)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state restriction; general sanitation applies

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Tennessee does not preempt local zoning. Rutherford County and City of Murfreesboro may have home occupation permit requirements; operator should check with Rutherford County Planning or city zoning)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (No routine inspection; complaint possible)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Non-TCS foods only; label required; no state permit or inspection; produced at producer’s private residence
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific state restriction; general sanitation applies
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water at residence
HANDWASHING	Standard handwashing practices
FOOD STORAGE	Sanitary storage at residence

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No routine inspection; complaint possible
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Tennessee does not preempt local zoning. Rutherford County and City of Murfreesboro may have home occupation permit requirements; operator should check with Rutherford County Planning or city zoning
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct and indirect sales allowed; farmers markets, events, online, retail stores all permitted
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified

Relevant county code

Not identified

RESEARCH NOTES

TN Food Freedom Act is permissive. No Rutherford County-specific cottage food restrictions found. Fast-growing county near Nashville; local municipalities may have home business zoning rules.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://rutherfordcountyttn.gov>

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

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Rutherford County	Williamson County	Davidson County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state restriction; general sanitation applies	Not specified in state statute; no state inspection requirement	Not specified under Food Freedom Act
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct and indirect sales allowed; farmers markets, events, online, retail stores all permitted	All sales channels allowed under TN Food Freedom Act: farmers markets, grocery stores, roadside stands, events, online orders, and in-state...	Tennessee Food Freedom Act: no restrictions on sales venues or methods for non-TCS foods. Direct-to-consumer, online, delivery, events, far...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Yes	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Yes
RESTRICTIONS	Non-TCS foods only; label required; no state permit or inspection; produced at producer's private residence	All non-TCS homemade food products allowed with no license, permit, inspection, or labeling requirements from state (Tennessee Food Freedom...	State baseline: any non-TCS homemade food from private residence. No license, permit, inspection, or labeling requirements at state level. ...
FOOD STORAGE	Sanitary storage at residence	Non-TCS foods only; no refrigerated finished products	No specific state requirements
POPULATION	343,727	248,897	709,786

State context — Tennessee cottage food law

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

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