

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Washington County

Tennessee · Jonesborough · FIPS 47179 · Population
133,282 · Crosodo Index #1017*

STATE BASELINE

Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act, eff. July 1, 2022)

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

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: WASHINGTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1017* · FIPS 47179 · Jonesborough

Washington County

Population 133,282 · State baseline: Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act, eff. July 1, 2022) ·

MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Tennessee Food Freedom Act (2022) broadly deregulates non-TCS homemade food production and sales. No licensing, permit, inspection, or labeling requirements except DOH may investigate foodborne illness. All non-TCS homemade foods allowed.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not prohibited by state statute.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Washington County (TN) zoning ordinance applies in unincorporated areas. The town of Jonesborough (historic first town in Tennessee) and nearby Johnson City (which straddles county boundaries) have their own ordinances. No specific county-level cottage food permit override identified.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (TN DOH may investigate only in connection with foodborne illness outbreak.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Tennessee Food Freedom Act (2022) broadly deregulates non-TCS homemade food production and sales. No licensing, permit, inspection, or labeling requirements except DOH may investigate foodborne illness. All non-TCS homemade foods allowed.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Not prohibited by state statute.
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water required (good practice).
HANDWASHING	Required per good food safety practices.
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS foods only; stored in food-safe containers.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — TN DOH may investigate only in connection with foodborne illness outbreak.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Washington County (TN) zoning ordinance applies in unincorporated areas. The town of Jonesborough (historic first town in Tennessee) and nearby Johnson City (which straddles county boundaries) have their own ordinances. No specific county-level cottage food permit override identified.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Sales permitted from home, farmers markets, events, online, retail, and restaurants. Broad allowance under Tennessee Food Freedom Act.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified.

Relevant county code

Not identified for Washington County, TN; state law (Tenn. Code §53-1-125) governs.

RESEARCH NOTES

State baseline (TN) confirmed: Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act). Washington County TN govt URL confirmed. Washington County TN is in the Tri-Cities region (Johnson City/Kingsport/Bristol). County follows state baseline. Confidence medium.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.washingtoncountyttn.org>

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

<https://www.washingtoncountyttn.org>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Washington County	Sullivan County	Greene County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not prohibited by state statute.	No specific state restriction on pets in home for cottage food.	Not specified in state law
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Sales permitted from home, farmers markets, events, online, retail, and restaurants. Broad allowance under Tennessee Food Freedom Act.	Sales allowed anywhere — direct, online, retail, wholesale, restaurant sales all permitted under the Food Freedom Act for non-TCS foods. No...	Indirect sales allowed at markets, online sales permitted; delivery by producer permitted in-state
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (2022) broadly deregulates non-TCS homemade food production and sales. No licensing, permit, inspection, or labe...	Tennessee Food Freedom Act (eff. July 1, 2022) broadly allows all non-TCS homemade foods from a private residence. No license, permit, insp...	No sales cap. No registration required. No inspection required. All non-TCS homemade foods allowed. Indirect sales allowed (farmers markets...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS foods only; stored in food-safe containers.	Non-TCS foods only; proper storage practices recommended.	Appropriate storage for non-TCS products
POPULATION	133,282	158,722	70,399

State context — Tennessee cottage food law

Washington 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.

<p>STATUTE Tenn. Code §53-1-125 (Food Freedom Act)</p> <p>REGISTRATION REQUIRED No</p> <p>KITCHEN INSPECTION No</p>	<p>ANNUAL SALES CAP —</p> <p>FOOD HANDLER CERT No</p> <p>DIRECT SALES ONLY No</p>
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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 Washington County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

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