

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Washington County

Texas · Brenham · FIPS 48477 · Population 37,810 · Crosodo
Index #126*

STATE BASELINE

Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq.

STATE TIER

Great

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

150000

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

2026-05-06

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.

TEXAS: WASHINGTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #126* · FIPS 48477 · Brenham

Washington County

Population 37,810 · State baseline: Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq. · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Texas cottage food law (SB 541, effective Sept 1 2025) allows sale of nearly all non-TCS foods plus TCS foods directly to consumers. Annual gross income cap \$150,000 (CPI-indexed). No permit, license, or inspection fee may be required by any local or county authority. Washington County is a rural Central Texas county with no county zoning code; state law governs.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific pet restriction in state cottage food law.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

No (Texas law explicitly prohibits local health departments and county governments from requiring cottage food producers to obtain any license, permit, or pay any fee. Washington County has no county zoning ordinance for unincorporated areas.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (No routine inspection. DSHS or local health authority may act only to prevent an immediate and serious threat to human life or health.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Texas cottage food law (SB 541, effective Sept 1 2025) allows sale of nearly all non-TCS foods plus TCS foods directly to consumers. Annual gross income cap \$150,000 (CPI-indexed). No permit, license, or inspection fee may be required by any local or county authority. Washington County is a rural Central Texas county with no county zoning code; state law governs.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific pet restriction in state cottage food law.
WATER SUPPLY	No specific state cottage food water testing requirement.
HANDWASHING	No specific state cottage food handwashing mandate beyond food safety education requirement.
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS foods unrestricted; TCS foods must be held at proper temperatures (≤41°F or ≥135°F).

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No routine inspection. DSHS or local health authority may act only to prevent an immediate and serious threat to human life or health.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	No — Texas law explicitly prohibits local health departments and county governments from requiring cottage food producers to obtain any license, permit, or pay any fee. Washington County has no county zoning ordinance for unincorporated areas.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	No

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct-to-consumer sales anywhere in Texas including home pickup, farmers markets, events, and online (with personal delivery). Non-TCS foods may be sold wholesale through registered cottage food vendors. No interstate shipping.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified in state statute.

Relevant county code

No county zoning ordinance identified for unincorporated Washington County. State law preempts local cottage food regulation.

RESEARCH NOTES

Washington County is a rural Central Texas county (county seat Brenham, home of Blue Bell Creameries and Bluebell Ice Cream). No county zoning authority outside incorporated municipalities. Defaulted to state baseline.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/retail-food-establishments/texas-cottage-food-production>

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.437.htm>

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

State context — Texas cottage food law

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

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq.	150000
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
No	No
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
No	No

INDIRECT SALES
 Limited (see notes) — Sales must be made directly to consumers or to a 'cottage food vendor' (a new category created by SB 541 in 2025 – a person with a contractual relationship who sells on behalf of the cottage food operation to consumers in-state). Cottage food products may not be sold as ingredients to a food service establishment. No retail grocery store or wholesale sales permitted under the pre-2025 framework; SB 541 (2025) adds the cottage food vendor intermediary option. Products must be delivered to consumer or vendor at point of sale or consumer-designated location.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

- State statute: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.437.htm>
 - State dept cottage food page: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/food-establishments/cottage-food-production-operations>
 - Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/texas/>
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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/texas/washington-county-discuss>
