

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Arlington County

Virginia · Arlington · FIPS 51013 · Population 235,845 ·
Crosodo Index #2172*

STATE BASELINE

Va. Code §3.2-5130

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

Tiered

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.

VIRGINIA: ARLINGTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2172* · FIPS 51013 · Arlington

Arlington County

Population 235,845 · State baseline: Va. Code §3.2-5130 · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only. No state registration required for general cottage foods. Pickles/acidified vegetables capped at \$9,000/year. Label requirement. Arlington County explicitly lists 'Food Preparation and Home Occupations' as a permitted home occupation, but requires a Home Occupation Permit from Arlington's Permit Arlington system.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not specified in state statute

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (Arlington County requires a Home Occupation Permit for food preparation home occupations, submitted online via Permit Arlington. 'Food Preparation and Home Occupations' is explicitly listed as a permitted home occupation per Arlington Zoning Ordinance §12.9.11. Application fee applies per Arlington fee schedule. Restaurants and tearooms are explicitly NOT permitted as home occupations.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (VDACS may inspect upon consumer complaint)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only. No state registration required for general cottage foods. Pickles/acidified vegetables capped at \$9,000/year. Label requirement. Arlington County explicitly lists 'Food Preparation and Home Occupations' as a permitted home occupation, but requires a Home Occupation Permit from Arlington's Permit Arlington system.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Not specified in state statute
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water supply required
HANDWASHING	No formal certification required by state
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods; extensive prohibited list (TCS foods, dairy, meat, fish)

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — VDACS may inspect upon consumer complaint
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — Arlington County requires a Home Occupation Permit for food preparation home occupations, submitted online via Permit Arlington. 'Food Preparation and Home Occupations' is explicitly listed as a permitted home occupation per Arlington Zoning Ordinance §12.9.11. Application fee applies per Arlington fee schedule. Restaurants and tearooms are explicitly NOT permitted as home occupations.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales to consumers only per VA state law; no retail consignment. Check Arlington zoning for customer visit limits.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified in state statute; Arlington home occupation rules may limit non-resident employees

Relevant county code

Va. Code §3.2-5130; Arlington County Zoning Ordinance §12.9.11 (Home Occupations)

RESEARCH NOTES

Arlington County has a specific Home Occupation Permit page (arlingtonva.us) with 'Food Preparation and Home Occupations' explicitly listed as a permitted home occupation category. The county requires online permit application via Permit Arlington system under §12.9.11 of the Zoning Ordinance. Restaurants and tearooms explicitly excluded. This is one of the few counties in the batch with confirmed specific cottage food / food prep home occupation language from a county .gov source. Virginia state \$9,000 pickle cap applies. Confidence high due to specific Arlington County .gov source.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Permits/Home-Occupation>

<https://www.arlingtonva.us>

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Permits/Home-Occupation>

<https://building.arlingtonva.us/resource/food-preparation-home-occupations>

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-information-for-vendors-and-businesses-home-food-processors.shtml>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Arlington County	Alexandria city	Fairfax County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Conditional	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not specified in state statute	If pets present, food processing/storage areas must be enclosed/separated with a latching door (for VDACS Home Food Processing permit pathw...	State baseline applies
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Conditional	No
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	No	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales to consumers only per VA state law; no retail consignment. Check Arlington zoning for customer visit limits.	Under §3.2-5130 exemption: direct-to-consumer sales only; no resale. Under VDACS permit: broader sales allowed. Customer traffic to home bu...	Sale and delivery must occur exclusively online or off-site — on-site retail customer pickup is not permitted for home-based food productio...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Yes	Yes
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes	Yes	Yes
RESTRICTIONS	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only. No state registration required for general cottage foods. Pickles/acidified vegetables capped at \$9,000/ye...	Virginia §3.2-5130 cottage food exemption applies. Non-TCS shelf-stable foods allowed (limited list). Pickles/acidified vegetables capped a...	Fairfax County requires a Home-Based Business Permit with a Home-Based Food Production Supplemental Form for all home-based food operations...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods; extensive prohibited list (TCS foods, dairy, meat, fish)	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only under cottage food exemption.	State baseline applies
POPULATION	235,845	157,594	1,145,354

State context — Virginia cottage food law

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

STATUTE

Va. Code §3.2-5130

ANNUAL SALES CAP

Tiered

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

No

FOOD HANDLER CERT

No

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

Yes

INDIRECT SALES

No — Products must be sold in person in the Commonwealth to an individual for his own consumption and not for resale or consignment. They cannot be offered for sale to be used in or offered for consumption in retail food establishments. Sales venues are limited to: private home, temporary event (no more than 14 consecutive days), or farmers market. Internet advertising is explicitly permitted but sales must remain in-person and in-state.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/3.2-5130/>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-information-for-vendors-and-businesses-home-food-processors.shtml>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/virginia/>

Questions?

Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss Arlington County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

<https://crosodo.com/nb/virginia/arlington-county-discuss>
