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crosodo

The Cottage Baker's Field Guide

A 50-state directory of cottage food law, made for home bakers.

01 · METHODOLOGY

What is cottage food law?

Cottage food law is the patchwork of state and local rules that lets home bakers sell certain foods made in their home kitchens — without a commercial license. Every US state plus the District of Columbia now has one, but they vary wildly. What you can sell, where, and how much, all depend on which side of the state line you're on.

THE MECHANICS

Most cottage food laws rest on three pillars: (1) a list of allowed products — typically shelf-stable, low-risk items like baked goods, jams, dried herbs, and candies; (2) a sales channel restriction — direct-to-consumer is universal, but online, mail-order, retail, and wholesale vary widely; and (3) a sales cap, which can be anywhere from \$5,000 a year to unlimited. A growing number of states have removed caps entirely under the 'food freedom' framework.

WHO ENFORCES IT

Enforcement usually falls to the state department of agriculture or department of public health. Many states delegate registration and inspection to county-level health departments, which is why local rules — zoning, signage, parking — can still apply even when the state law says you're in the clear. Always check your city or county in addition to your state.

HOW WE GRADE

Crosodo classifies each jurisdiction into one of five tiers — Freedom, Great, Good, Okay, Poor — based on the breadth of allowed products, the height of any sales cap, and the number of permitted sales channels. We cross-reference our tier with the Institute for Justice's letter grade (A through F), included for every state on the next pages.

02 · CLASSIFICATION

The five tiers.

FREEDOM

Sell almost anything direct to consumer. No sales cap. Often called 'food freedom' laws.

Examples: Wyoming, Utah, Maine, North Dakota, Iowa

GREAT

No or very high sales cap, broad product list, multiple sales channels including retail.

Examples: Alaska, Texas, Vermont, Colorado, Minnesota

GOOD

Solid law with moderate restrictions — typically a high cap and standard direct-to-consumer rules.

Examples: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois

OKAY

Usable but constrained: low sales caps, limited product list, or limited channels.

Examples: Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Tennessee

POOR

Heavy restrictions on products, channels, or permits. Often requires inspections.

Examples: Hawaii, New Jersey, Rhode Island

03 · DIRECTORY · PART 1

All 51 jurisdictions.

STATE	TIER	IJ	STATUTE
Alabama	Good	B	Ala. Code §22-20-5.2
Alaska	Okay	C	18 AAC 31.012
Arizona	Great	B+	A.R.S. §36-136(H)(4)(g)
Arkansas	Freedom	B+	A.C.A. §20-57-201
California	Good	C	AB 1616 / Health & Safety §113758
Colorado	Great	B-	C.R.S. §25-4-1614
Connecticut	Okay	D	Conn. Gen. Stat. §21a-62a
Delaware	Good	F	16 Del. C. §122
District of Columbia	Okay	D	D.C. Code §48-110.01
Florida	Great	B-	Fla. Stat. §500.80
Georgia	Okay	D+	O.C.G.A. §26-2-1
Hawaii	Poor	F	HRS §321-30.5
Idaho	Great	A-	IDAPA 16.02.19
Illinois	Great	B-	410 ILCS 625/4 (Home-to-Market Act)
Indiana	Great	B	Ind. Code §16-42-5.2
Iowa	Good	B	Iowa Code §137F.1
Kansas	Great	B+	K.S.A. §65-657
Kentucky	Okay	D	KRS §217.137
Louisiana	Okay	C	La. R.S. §40:4.13
Maine	Freedom	B+	7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act)
Maryland	Good	C-	MD COMAR 10.15.03
Massachusetts	Okay	C	105 CMR 590.000
Michigan	Great	B-	MCL §289.4101
Minnesota	Great	B+	Minn. Stat. §28A.152 (Pickle Bill)
Mississippi	Good	C+	Miss. Code Ann. §75-29-1.1
Missouri	Great	B+	Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298

03 · DIRECTORY · PART 2

STATE	TIER	IJ	STATUTE
Montana	Freedom	A-	Mont. Code §50-50-117 (Local Food Choice Act)
Nebraska	Good	B-	Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-2,239.05
Nevada	Okay	C-	NRS §446.866
New Hampshire	Good	C	RSA §143-A:12
New Jersey	Poor	D	N.J.A.C. 8:24-2
New Mexico	Great	B	NMSA §25-2-1
New York	Good	C	N.Y. Agric. & Mkts. Law §251-z-4
North Carolina	Good	B-	02 NCAC 9C.0307
North Dakota	Freedom	A-	N.D. Cent. Code §23-09-21
Ohio	Good	B	O.R.C. §3715.01
Oklahoma	Freedom	A-	63 O.S. §1-1119 (Homemade Food Freedom Act)
Oregon	Good	D+	ORS §616.706
Pennsylvania	Good	B	3 Pa.C.S. §5701
Rhode Island	Poor	D+	R.I. Gen. Laws §21-27-6.1
South Carolina	Good	B-	S.C. Code §44-1-145
South Dakota	Good	B	SDCL §34-18
Tennessee	Good	B-	Tenn. Code §53-8-117
Texas	Great	B	Tex. Health & Safety §437.001
Utah	Freedom	A-	Utah Code §4-5-9.5
Vermont	Okay	B/D+	20 V.S.A. §2912 (Home Bakery)
Virginia	Good	C	Va. Code §3.2-5130
Washington	Good	D	RCW §69.22.040
West Virginia	Good	B	W. Va. Code §16-7-1
Wisconsin	Freedom	B	Wis. Stat. §97.29
Wyoming	Freedom	A	Wyo. Stat. §35-7-1701 (Food Freedom Act)

04 · SOURCES & FINE PRINT

Sources & methodology.

PRIMARY SOURCES

State departments of agriculture and public health

Statutory and regulatory text, registration forms, and enforcement guidance.

Forrager.com

Independent cottage food law tracker maintained since 2014. State-by-state coverage.

Institute for Justice — Cottage Food Report

Letter-grade evaluations of every state, focused on economic-liberty metrics.

Cooperative Extension services

University-affiliated educational resources and short courses.

FINE PRINT

None of this is legal advice. Cottage food laws change every year and municipal zoning codes update quarterly. Verify with your state's department of agriculture, your local health department, and your city or county's planning office before relying on any of it. Crosodo is a clothing brand for cottage bakers, not a law firm.

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Apparel + cottage food law resources for the cottage baker community.
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