

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Washington County

Alabama · Chatom · FIPS 01129 · Population 15,018 · Crosodo
Index #813*

STATE BASELINE

Ala. Code §22-20-5.1

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

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.

How to start — 60-second path

Washington County, Alabama — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

No

PETS

No specific state restriction; standard sanitation best practices apply.

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under Alabama cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ Alabama home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[Alabama label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

ALABAMA: WASHINGTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #813* · FIPS 01129 · Chatom

Washington County

Population 15,018 · State baseline: Ala. Code §22-20-5.1 · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Must complete a state-approved food safety course (e.g., ACES course, \$25) before selling. Must file paperwork (food safety course certificate, sample product label, completed cottage food review form) with local county health department. Fees vary by county. Business license required from municipality.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state restriction; standard sanitation best practices apply.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (No state food permit required. However, each municipality (city/town) may require a local business license. The county health department provides a written confirmation of document review, which may be needed for the business license process. Check with local city or county clerk.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (State law (§22-20-5.1(b)) explicitly states cottage food operations are not required to have a food service permit and county health departments may not regulate production except as provided by the section. Inspection only upon suspected foodborne illness investigation.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Must complete a state-approved food safety course (e.g., ACES course, \$25) before selling. Must file paperwork (food safety course certificate, sample product label, completed cottage food review form) with local county health department. Fees vary by county. Business license required from municipality.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

No specific state restriction; standard sanitation best practices apply.

WATER SUPPLY

Standard potable water; no specific state-level home kitchen water testing requirement for cottage food.

HANDWASHING

Standard food safety handwashing practices required per food safety course training.

FOOD STORAGE

Non-potentially hazardous foods only; must be shelf-stable and not require time/temperature control for safety.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

No — State law (§22-20-5.1(b)) explicitly states cottage food operations are not required to have a food service permit and county health departments may not regulate production except as provided by the section. Inspection only upon suspected foodborne illness investigation.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

Conditional — No state food permit required. However, each municipality (city/town) may require a local business license. The county health department provides a written confirmation of document review, which may be needed for the business license process. Check with local city or county clerk.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

Yes

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales to consumers permitted in person, by phone, online, or via mail within Alabama. Delivery may be in person, by an agent, or by mail. Interstate shipping not permitted under Alabama cottage food law.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	No explicit state limit; operation must remain home-based.

Relevant county code

Ala. Code §22-20-5.1 (state law governs; county health departments have no independent regulatory authority over cottage food operations beyond document review).

RESEARCH NOTES

Alabama state law (§22-20-5.1) explicitly preempts county health departments from adding requirements beyond reviewing food safety course certification and product labels. No home kitchen inspection required. Business license required at city/municipality level — fees and process vary locally. Food safety course certification (ACES or ANSI-accredited, \$25, valid 3 years) required before selling. County-specific URLs not confirmed; state-level rules apply uniformly across all counties. No county-specific ordinances found that deviate from state baseline.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.washingtoncounty.gov>

<https://law.justia.com/codes/alabama/title-22/title-1/chapter-20/section-22-20-5-1/>

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/foodsafety/assets/cottagefoodlawfaqs.pdf>

<http://www.aces.edu/go/cottagefoodbusiness>

Questions about this county? Local notes and a place to leave a question: crosodo.com/nb/alabama/washington-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Washington County	Choctaw County	Clarke County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state restriction; standard sanitation best practices apply.	Not specified in state statute.	Not specified in state statute.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes	Yes	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales to consumers permitted in person, by phone, online, or via mail within Alabama. Delivery may be in person, by an agent, or by ...	Direct to consumer only within Alabama.	Direct to consumer only within Alabama.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Must complete a state-approved food safety course (e.g., ACES course, \$25) before selling. Must file paperwork (food safety course certific...	Must produce non-potentially hazardous foods only (no meat/poultry/fish). Sales direct to consumer only within Alabama. Must complete ADPH-...	Must produce non-potentially hazardous foods only (no meat/poultry/fish). Sales direct to consumer only within Alabama. Must complete ADPH-...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-potentially hazardous foods only; must be shelf-stable and not require time/temperature control for safety.	Not specifically regulated.	Not specifically regulated.
POPULATION	15,434	12,669	23,058

State context — Alabama cottage food law

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

STATUTE

Ala. Code §22-20-5.1

ANNUAL SALES CAP

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REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

FOOD HANDLER CERT

Yes (specific course)

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

Yes

INDIRECT SALES

No — Indirect sales to grocery stores, restaurants, or wholesale are not permitted; producers may use an agent for delivery but cannot sell through retailers.

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Alabama cottage food law report](#) on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/alabama.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/code-of-alabama>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/foodsafety/cottage-food-law.html>

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

Questions about Washington County? Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

crosodo.com/nb/alabama/washington-county-discuss

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Washington County, Alabama. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours on Crosodo.

crosodo.com/nb/alabama/washington-county-discuss

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