

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Merced County

California · Merced · FIPS 06047 · Population 282,290 ·
Crosodo Index #2182*

STATE BASELINE

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758; Class A (direct sales, \$75,000 cap) and Class B (direct and indirect, \$150,000 cap); annual registration/permit required; food handler card required

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Good	Tiered (see notes)	HIGH	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.

How to start — 60-second path

Merced County, California — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

Tiered (see notes)

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

Depends-on-volume

PETS

**Not specified in available sources;
general sanitation and clean kitchen
required**

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under California 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
- ☐ California home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

Open the live county page →

California label one-pager →

Local notes & questions →

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

CALIFORNIA: MERCED COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2182* · FIPS 06047 · Merced

Merced County

Population 282,290 · State baseline: Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758; Class A (direct sales, \$75,000 cap) and Class B (direct and indirect, \$150,000 cap); annual registration/permit required; food handler card required · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (CDPH-approved food list only; annual Class A registration or Class B permit required from Merced County Environmental Health; food handler card required within 3 months; Class B requires initial and annual kitchen inspection; \$75,000/\$150,000 annual cap; no TCS foods)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not specified in available sources; general sanitation and clean kitchen required

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (California Homemade Food Act (AB 1616) requires planning/zoning approval from local city or county planning department for all CFOs. Merced County planning department approval must be obtained; some municipalities may also require city business license)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Depends-on-volume (Class A: inspection upon consumer complaint or reported foodborne illness only. Class B: initial inspection before permit issuance and annual inspections, plus complaint-based)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — CDPH-approved food list only; annual Class A registration or Class B permit required from Merced County Environmental Health; food handler card required within 3 months; Class B requires initial and annual kitchen inspection; \$75,000/\$150,000 annual cap; no TCS foods
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Not specified in available sources; general sanitation and clean kitchen required
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water at residence
HANDWASHING	Standard handwashing; Class B inspection will verify
FOOD STORAGE	CDPH-approved non-TCS foods stored in sanitary conditions

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Depends-on-volume — Class A: inspection upon consumer complaint or reported foodborne illness only. Class B: initial inspection before permit issuance and annual inspections, plus complaint-based
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — California Homemade Food Act (AB 1616) requires planning/zoning approval from local city or county planning department for all CFOs. Merced County planning department approval must be obtained; some municipalities may also require city business license
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Class A: direct sales only (at home, farmers markets, events). Class B: direct and indirect sales including retail stores and online. Max 1 non-family FTE employee
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	1 full-time equivalent (excluding family or household members)

Relevant county code

Merced County Environmental Health CFO Registration/Permit; [countyofmerced.com/1636/Applications-Forms-Permits](https://www.countyofmerced.com/1636/Applications-Forms-Permits)

RESEARCH NOTES

Merced County confirmed: county has its own CFO registration/permitting form and Environmental Health application process. Zoning approval from planning department required per CA law. Class A \$75,000 cap, Class B \$150,000 cap. Food handler card required within 3 months of approval.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.countyofmerced.com>

<https://www.countyofmerced.com/DocumentCenter/View/31479/Cottage-Food-Application>

<https://www.countyofmerced.com/1636/Applications-Forms-Permits>

<https://www.countyofmerced.com/DocumentCenter/View/5348/Cottage-Food-Law-FAQs-2012>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Merced County	Stanislaus County	Madera County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Conditional
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not specified in available sources; general sanitation and clean kitchen required	No specific state cottage food pet restriction beyond general sanitation	No specific state restriction on pets, but pets must not be in food preparation areas per GMP.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Depends-on-volume	Conditional	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Class A: direct sales only (at home, farmers markets, events). Class B: direct and indirect sales including retail stores and online. Max 1...	Class A: direct sales only — at residence, certified farmers markets, bake sales, community events. Class B: adds indirect sales to local s...	Class A: direct sales only, online and shipping within California. Class B: direct sales plus retail stores and restaurants. Both classes: ...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Yes	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Yes	Yes
RESTRICTIONS	CDPH-approved food list only; annual Class A registration or Class B permit required from Merced County Environmental Health; food handler ...	Class A: direct sales only, ~\$86,206 annual cap, registration with Stanislaus County Environmental Resources, no inspection. Class B: direc...	California two-class system: Class A (direct sales only, ~\$86,206 cap, 2025 CPI-adjusted) requires county registration and food safety trai...
FOOD STORAGE	CDPH-approved non-TCS foods stored in sanitary conditions	Approved non-potentially hazardous food storage in home kitchen only	Only state-approved non-PHF foods. Products must be in compliant packaging.
POPULATION	282,290	552,063	157,243

State context — California cottage food law

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

STATUTE

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758

ANNUAL SALES CAP

Tiered (see notes)

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

FOOD HANDLER CERT

Yes (specific course)

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

No

INDIRECT SALES

Limited (see notes) — Class B permit holders may sell indirectly through retail stores and restaurants statewide; Class A registrants are limited to direct sales only and may not sell through any retail or wholesale venue.

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the **California cottage food law report** on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/california.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC§ionNum=113758

State dept cottage food page: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/Cottage%20Food%20Operations/CFO_Faq.pdf

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

Questions about Merced 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/california/merced-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 Merced County, California. 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/california/merced-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

Ads are paid placements. Crosodo does not endorse listed vendors. Verify all information independently. · To advertise: crosodo.com/advertise