

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Santa Cruz County

California · Santa Cruz · FIPS 06087 · Population 268,571 ·
Crosodo Index #1220*

STATE BASELINE

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

Tiered (see notes)

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

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.

How to start — 60-second path

Santa Cruz 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?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

Conditional

PETS

Not specified by county; state law requires sanitary food preparation area

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: SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1220* · FIPS 06087 · Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz County

Population 268,571 · State baseline: Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758 · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Class A (direct sales, cap ~\$86,206/year) or Class B (direct+indirect, cap ~\$172,411/year). Must register with Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Department. Requires CA food handler card within 90 days of permit. Class B requires prior home kitchen inspection. Annual permit renewal required. Only CDPH-approved foods allowed.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not specified by county; state law requires sanitary food preparation area

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (California state law (Gov. Code §51035) preempts local zoning from restricting CFOs. Santa Cruz County may require a local business license for unincorporated areas. Must obtain local business license from Santa Cruz County or respective city.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Conditional (Class B: inspection required before permit issued; Class A: no routine inspection (self-certification checklist); either class subject to inspection upon complaint)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Class A (direct sales, cap ~\$86,206/year) or Class B (direct+indirect, cap ~\$172,411/year). Must register with Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Department. Requires CA food handler card within 90 days of permit. Class B requires prior home kitchen inspection. Annual permit renewal required. Only CDPH-approved foods allowed.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Not specified by county; state law requires sanitary food preparation area
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water supply required
HANDWASHING	Adequate handwashing facilities; CA food handler card required
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods on CDPH approved list only; no refrigerated products

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Conditional — Class B: inspection required before permit issued; Class A: no routine inspection (self-certification checklist); either class subject to inspection upon complaint
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — California state law (Gov. Code §51035) preempts local zoning from restricting CFOs. Santa Cruz County may require a local business license for unincorporated areas. Must obtain local business license from Santa Cruz County or respective city.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Class A: direct sales only (including online with local delivery/pickup or shipping within CA). Class B: direct + indirect sales (wholesale to retailers within county, with some reciprocal agreements). No interstate sales.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	One full-time non-family employee maximum (state law)

Relevant county code

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758; Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Department permit

RESEARCH NOTES

Santa Cruz County follows California's two-tier CFO system under Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758. No specific Santa Cruz County EHS cottage food page was retrieved but the system is uniform statewide. California state law preempts local zoning restrictions on CFOs. Caps are CPI-adjusted annually (~\$86K Class A, ~\$172K Class B as of 2025). No direct Santa Cruz County .gov URL found for cottage food — confidence medium based on state baseline applicability.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov>

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

<https://ucanr.edu/site/cottage-foods/two-tiered-permit-registration-system>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Santa Cruz County	Monterey County	San Mateo County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Conditional	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not specified by county; state law requires sanitary food preparation area	Pets prohibited from kitchen during food production per state law.	Standard sanitation; MEHKO requires food safety compliance
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Conditional	Upon-complaint	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Class A: direct sales only (including online with local delivery/pickup or shipping within CA). Class B: direct + indirect sales (wholesale...	Class A: direct to consumer only; internet sales must be in-person pickup or delivery within county. Class B: retail/wholesale/mail order a...	CFO Class A: direct sales only (\$75,000 cap). CFO Class B: direct + indirect (\$150,000 cap). MEHKO: direct-to-consumer only (dine-in, take-...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Yes	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes	Yes	Conditional
RESTRICTIONS	Class A (direct sales, cap ~\$86,206/year) or Class B (direct+indirect, cap ~\$172,411/year). Must register with Santa Cruz County Environmen...	California cottage food law (Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758) allows Class A (direct sales only) and Class B (direct and indirect sales i...	Two pathways: (1) CFO Class A/ B under §113758; (2) MEHKO under §113825 — San Mateo County has permanently authorized MEHKOs (ordinance appr...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods on CDPH approved list only; no refrigerated products	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only per state-approved CDPH list.	Standard per state approved foods list (CFO) or California Retail Food Code (MEHKO)
POPULATION	268,571	437,609	754,250

State context — California cottage food law

Santa Cruz 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

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

KITCHEN INSPECTION

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.

ANNUAL SALES CAP

Tiered (see notes)

FOOD HANDLER CERT

Yes (specific course)

DIRECT SALES ONLY

No

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 Santa Cruz 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/santa-cruz-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 Santa Cruz 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/santa-cruz-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.

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