

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Mercer County

New Jersey · Trenton · FIPS 34021 · Population 383,732 ·
Crosodo Index #2814*

STATE BASELINE

N.J.A.C. 8:24-11 et seq.

STATE TIER

Poor

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

50000

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

Mercer County, New Jersey — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Conditional

STATE SALES CAP

50000

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

Upon-complaint

PETS

Not specified in state rule; standard food safety GMP applies.

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

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

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[New Jersey label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

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

NEW JERSEY: MERCER COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2814* · FIPS 34021 · Trenton

Mercer County

Population 383,732 · State baseline: N.J.A.C. 8:24-11 et seq. · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Conditional (New Jersey requires a state Cottage Food Operator Permit (\$100 fee, valid 2 years) from NJ Department of Health. Requirements: (1) local zoning must allow cottage food business; (2) Food Protection Manager Certification; (3) proof of water potability; (4) product questionnaire for each item. Annual gross sales cap \$50,000. Home kitchen not inspected routinely. Only non-TCS foods permitted from approved list. Direct sales only within New Jersey.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Not specified in state rule; standard food safety GMP applies.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (NJ state permit process requires applicant to first confirm local zoning allows cottage food business. Mercer County municipalities (Trenton, Princeton, Hamilton Township, etc.) have their own zoning ordinances. Contact local zoning board before applying to state.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (Health authority may inspect upon complaint or suspected foodborne illness; no routine inspection.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Conditional — New Jersey requires a state Cottage Food Operator Permit (\$100 fee, valid 2 years) from NJ Department of Health. Requirements: (1) local zoning must allow cottage food business; (2) Food Protection Manager Certification; (3) proof of water potability; (4) product questionnaire for each item. Annual gross sales cap \$50,000. Home kitchen not inspected routinely. Only non-TCS foods permitted from approved list. Direct sales only within New Jersey.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

Not specified in state rule; standard food safety GMP applies.

WATER SUPPLY

Proof of water potability required: microbiological coliform analysis if private well; recent water bill if public water.

HANDWASHING

Standard food safety practices required.

FOOD STORAGE

Non-TCS shelf-stable food storage only.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

Upon-complaint — Health authority may inspect upon complaint or suspected foodborne illness; no routine inspection.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

Conditional — NJ state permit process requires applicant to first confirm local zoning allows cottage food business. Mercer County municipalities (Trenton, Princeton, Hamilton Township, etc.) have their own zoning ordinances. Contact local zoning board before applying to state.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Sales from home, at NJ farmers markets and events (with local health dept approvals). No wholesale. No sales outside NJ.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Production must occur in private residential kitchen only.

Relevant county code

N.J.A.C. 8:24-11 (state Cottage Food Operator rules); local Mercer County municipal zoning codes vary.

RESEARCH NOTES

NJ state cottage food rules well-documented from .gov sources. Mercer County (Trenton) follows state NJ framework with no county-level cottage food program. Local municipal zoning approval required first. Food Manager Certification (not just food handler) required. Confidence medium: state law high-confidence; Mercer County municipal zoning rules not individually researched.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.mercercounty.org>

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cottagefood/rules-resources/rules>

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cottagefood/apply-renew>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Mercer County	Somerset County	Burlington County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Conditional	Yes	Conditional
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Not specified in state rule; standard food safety GMP applies.	Pets excluded from production area during food preparation	Not specified in state rule; standard food safety GMP applies.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	No	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Sales from home, at NJ farmers markets and events (with local health dept approvals). No wholesale. No sales outside NJ.	Direct to consumer only; no sales to retailers or restaurants; farmers markets and events allowed	Sales allowed from home, at farmers markets, and NJ events. Local health department approvals required for market/event sales. No sales out...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Varies	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	New Jersey requires a state Cottage Food Operator Permit (\$100 fee, valid 2 years) from NJ Department of Health. Requirements: (1) local zo...	Registration with NJ Dept of Health required; \$50,000 annual sales cap; food handler certificate required; direct to consumer only (no reta...	New Jersey requires a state Cottage Food Operator Permit (\$100 fee, valid 2 years) from NJ Department of Health. Applicant must: (1) first ...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable food storage only.	Non-TCS foods stored appropriately	Non-TCS shelf-stable food storage only. No TCS (refrigerated) foods permitted.
POPULATION	383,732	344,978	461,853

State context — New Jersey cottage food law

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

STATUTE

N.J.A.C. 8:24-11 et seq.

ANNUAL SALES CAP

50000

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

FOOD HANDLER CERT

Yes

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

Yes

INDIRECT SALES

No — Cottage food products may only be delivered or relinquished at: the operator's home (not for onsite consumption), the consumer's NJ home, a NJ farmers market or other permitted NJ location. Products cannot be sold to wholesale establishments, retail food establishments, or shipped out of state. Online and phone order-taking is allowed as an ancillary activity, but physical delivery must occur in New Jersey person-to-person or at permitted locations. Charitable bake sales remain exempt under separate provisions.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/phfpp/njac8_24.pdf

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/phfpp/cottage-food-operator/>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/new-jersey/>

Questions about Mercer 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/new-jersey/mercerc-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 Mercer County, New Jersey. 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/new-jersey/mercer-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