

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Harris County

Texas · Houston · FIPS 48201 · Population 4,726,177 ·
Crosodo Index #185*

STATE BASELINE

Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq.

STATE TIER

Great

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

150000

CONFIDENCE

HIGH

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

Harris County, Texas — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

150000

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

No

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

No

PETS

State baseline applies

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

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

CONTINUE ONLINE

Open the live county page →

Texas label one-pager →

Local notes & questions →

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

TEXAS: HARRIS COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #185* · FIPS 48201 · Houston

Harris County

Population 4,726,177 · State baseline: Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq. · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Harris County has no county-level zoning in its unincorporated areas, meaning no county zoning ordinance applies to home-based cottage food businesses. Deed restrictions and HOA covenants may restrict commercial activity on residential properties. The state law preempts local government from licensing or inspecting cottage food operations.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

State baseline applies

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

No (Harris County has no county-level zoning in unincorporated areas; no home occupation permit required from the county. Cities within Harris County (including Houston) have their own zoning and may require a home occupation permit.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (Health departments may act only to prevent an immediate and serious threat to human life or health (state law preemption). No routine or complaint-driven inspection authority for CFPO.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Harris County has no county-level zoning in its unincorporated areas, meaning no county zoning ordinance applies to home-based cottage food businesses. Deed restrictions and HOA covenants may restrict commercial activity on residential properties. The state law preempts local government from licensing or inspecting cottage food operations.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	State baseline applies
WATER SUPPLY	State baseline applies
HANDWASHING	State baseline applies
FOOD STORAGE	State baseline applies

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — Health departments may act only to prevent an immediate and serious threat to human life or health (state law preemption). No routine or complaint-driven inspection authority for CFPO.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	No — Harris County has no county-level zoning in unincorporated areas; no home occupation permit required from the county. Cities within Harris County (including Houston) have their own zoning and may require a home occupation permit.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies by city

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	State law allows direct sales, indirect sales (to restaurants and retailers), and online/delivery sales. No county-level restriction. Texas Local Government Code Ch. 231 Subchapter M prohibits counties from imposing zoning restrictions that would effectively ban CFPOs in residential areas.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	State baseline applies

Relevant county code

none — unincorporated areas only; Tex. Local Gov't Code §231.181-186 (Subchapter M) limits county zoning of CFPOs

RESEARCH NOTES

Harris County is unique among large Texas counties: it has NO county-level zoning in unincorporated areas, meaning cottage food operators there face zero county land-use restrictions beyond state law. However, the City of Houston and other incorporated cities within Harris County do have zoning codes that could require home occupation permits. Texas SB 541 (2025) raised the annual sales cap to \$150,000 and created a registry for operators selling TCS foods or selling to other vendors (effective Sept 1, 2025).

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov>

<https://www.harriscountytexas.gov>

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/retail-food-establishments/texas-cottage-food-production>

<https://law.justia.com/codes/texas/local-government-code/title-7/subtitle-b/chapter-231/subchapter-m/>

<https://www.cityrulelookup.com/home-business/zoning/harris-county-tx>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Harris County	Fort Bend County	Montgomery County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	State baseline applies	Not specified; standard sanitation applies	No specific state cottage food pet restriction; general sanitation standards apply
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	State law allows direct sales, indirect sales (to restaurants and retailers), and online/delivery sales. No county-level restriction. Texas...	Direct-to-consumer including online with personal delivery within Texas. SB 541 (2025): wholesale to registered cottage food vendors permit...	Non-TCS foods: direct sales at home, farmers markets, online, mail/delivery, roadside stands. Third-party online platforms (Goldbelly, Amaz...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	No	Conditional	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies by city	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Harris County has no county-level zoning in its unincorporated areas, meaning no county zoning ordinance applies to home-based cottage food...	Texas strong state preemption applies. No local permit, fee, or inspection for cottage food. Must be private home kitchen. Food handler cer...	No TCS foods without registration (as of SB 541, 2025). Non-TCS foods: no license, permit, or inspection required. Food handler certificati...
FOOD STORAGE	State baseline applies	Standard food storage practices	Standard home kitchen storage; products must not be adulterated
POPULATION	4,726,177	832,607	629,989

State context — Texas cottage food law

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

STATUTE

Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq.

ANNUAL SALES CAP

150000

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

No

FOOD HANDLER CERT

No

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

No

INDIRECT SALES

Limited (see notes) — Sales must be made directly to consumers or to a 'cottage food vendor' (a new category created by SB 541 in 2025 – a person with a contractual relationship who sells on behalf of the cottage food operation to consumers in-state). Cottage food products may not be sold as ingredients to a food service establishment. No retail grocery store or wholesale sales permitted under the pre-2025 framework; SB 541 (2025) adds the cottage food vendor intermediary option. Products must be delivered to consumer or vendor at point of sale or consumer-designated location.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.437.htm>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/food-establishments/cottage-food-production-operations>

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

Questions about Harris 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/texas/harris-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 Harris County, Texas. 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/texas/harris-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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