

Selling Homemade Food in Maine

All across the United States, people are making food at home to sell in their communities. Together, they form a small but growing industry—the homemade or “cottage food” industry. The movement fits within a larger trend toward healthy eating and responsible sourcing, as consumers take greater interest in where their food comes from and who makes it. Maine has been a leader in the movement, allowing “home food manufacturing” since 1980.

More recently, Maine has gone even further, passing a [Food Sovereignty Law](#) in 2017 that allows local governments within the state to legalize the sale of nearly all types of homemade foods directly to consumers. Before the law took effect, the state passed an [amendment](#) to exclude home-based meat and poultry processing. The amendment also excludes sales at farmers’ markets and other public venues. Under the Food Sovereignty Law, sales must occur at the “site of production,” which means only at farms and private residences. Sedgwick, Maine, became the [first municipality](#) to adopt a food sovereignty ordinance. An [updated map](#) from LocalFoodRules.org shows 97 Food Sovereignty municipalities in Maine as of 2021.

Grades For Homemade Food Laws	Maine Home Food Manufacturing	Maine Food Sovereignty
Final Grade	C	B+
Food Varieties Grade	C-	A
Sales and Venue Restrictions Grade	A+	C+
Regulatory Burdens Grade	F	B+

MAINE COTTAGE FOOD TYPES

Food Varieties	Maine Home Food Manufacturing	Maine Food Sovereignty
What Shelf-Stable Foods Can I Sell in Maine?	No restrictions	No restrictions
Can I Sell Refrigerated Baked Goods in Maine?	No	Yes
Can I Sell Meat in Maine?	No	Yes, fish and seafood.
Can I Sell Acidified or Pickled Foods in Maine?	Yes	Yes
Can I Sell Low-Acid Canned Goods in Maine?	No	Yes
Can I Sell Fermented Foods in Maine?	No	Yes

Many states regulate “cottage food,” meaning food made in home kitchens for sale. Maine cottage food producers may sell products that are shelf-stable, meaning they do not require time or temperature control for safety. Examples include most types of baked goods, candies, honey, ketchup, salsas, pickles, dried fruits and vegetables, cereals, pastas, pies, fruit butters, jams, jellies, fruit leather and popcorn.

If Maine cottage food producers live in a local jurisdiction with a food sovereignty ordinance, they may sell almost any food product, including fish and seafood, but not meat and poultry.