



## COTTAGE FOOD FACT SHEET

Cottage food operations are allowed to produce foods that do not require time and/or temperature control for safety. These types of foods are frequently referred to as non-TCS foods. Cottage food operations are allowed to distribute non-TCS food items directly to a consumer within Idaho without any regulatory oversight. Cottage food products must include labels (or placards at the sales location) that provide contact information for the operation and clearly state that the food was prepared in a home kitchen that is not subject to regulation and inspection by the regulatory authority and that it may contain allergens. ([IDAPA 16.02.19.001.04.i](#))

Distribution of any foods to a third party, including wholesale, consignment, or distribution of any foods outside of Idaho<sup>1</sup> will result in the operation being legally classified as a food establishment and subject to applicable regulatory requirements. This includes non-TCS foods.

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) will maintain applicable and updated information related to cottage foods on the Food Protection Program's website ([foodsafety.idaho.gov](https://foodsafety.idaho.gov)) and each of Idaho's Public Health District websites will include links to the information. The list below contains examples of non-Time/Temperature Control for Safety (non-TCS) foods.

DHW may add to or delete food products from this list. Notice of change(s), reason(s) for the change(s), and the nature of the change(s) will be posted on the Food Protection Program's website.

### Allowed non-TCS foods (July 1, 2015)

- Baked goods that do not require refrigeration<sup>2</sup>
- Fruit jams and jellies
- Honey
- Fruit pies
- Breads
- Cakes that do not require refrigeration
- Pastries and cookies that do not require refrigeration
- Candies and confections that do not require refrigeration
- Dried fruits<sup>3</sup>
- Dry herbs
- Seasonings and mixtures
- Cereals
- Trail mixes and granola
- Nuts
- Vinegar
- Popcorn and popcorn balls
- Tinctures that do not make medicinal claims<sup>4</sup>

Acidified foods such as pickled products do not meet the definition of non-TCS foods.

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<sup>1</sup> Cottage foods may be distributed direct to a consumer through internet sales or mail order sales.

<sup>2</sup> Foods that have a pH below 4.6 and/or a water activity ( $a_w$ ) below 0.85 do not require refrigeration. If you are uncertain about the pH and/or water activity of a food item, please consult your local Public Health District (PHD) for more information. The product may have to be laboratory tested for pH and/or water activity in order to determine whether it is a non-Time/Temperature Control for Safety (non-TCS) food.

<sup>3</sup> Dried fruits must have a natural pH below 4.6. Examples include apples, apricots, berries, grapes, peaches, and plums. Finished products will need to be evaluated for pH and  $a_w$  to confirm that they are non-TCS. Drying fruits in a homemade unit or sun-drying is not recommended. Drying should be done in a commercially/mass produced unit.

<sup>4</sup> A medicinal claim is a statement that implies the product can treat or cure a particular ailment.