



Colorado Cottage Foods: Fruit Empanadas and Tortillas

Fruit Empanadas

Empanadas are stuffed pastries, similar to turnovers, which are baked or fried. These popular snacks that originated in Latin America can be savory or sweet but only fruit-filled empanadas can be sold as cottage foods in Colorado.

Tortillas

Tortillas, originating in Mexico, are a type of soft, thin flatbread made from either maize (corn) flour or wheat flour. Corn tortillas tend to be heartier and thicker, whereas wheat tortillas are thinner and break less easily. Tortillas can be plain or flavored, and are used to make dishes such as tacos, burritos, and quesadillas.

Potential Products

Fruit Empanadas

Filling can resemble pie filling, such as apple or blueberry, or fresh summer fruits or preserves. Canned or processed fruit fillings can also be used. Only non-potentially hazardous fruit empanadas are allowed. Empanadas containing meat, cheese, custard, cream, or vegetables are not allowed as they are considered potentially hazardous, and therefore would require refrigeration.

Tortillas

Corn tortillas are made by mixing water with masa harina, a specially treated corn flour. Small balls of dough are flattened with a press or by hand, and then cooked on a hot skillet. The traditional ingredients used to make corn tortillas are naturally gluten-free.

Flour tortillas are made by combining wheat flour, salt, baking powder, and lard or shortening. Flour tortillas can be plain or flavored with a variety of ingredients, such as spinach, tomato, or roasted red pepper.

Packaging

Products must be packaged in food grade materials. All cottage food products must display the information required by the Colorado Cottage Foods Act and outlined by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.



Food Safety Concerns

Following safe handling practices after tortillas are prepared and empanadas are baked or fried is important to prevent cross-contamination of bacteria or viruses from hands or contact surfaces to the finished products.

Wheat is one of the “Big 8” top food allergens, and can pose serious health risks to those who are affected. Following the Colorado guidelines to include ingredients and the proper statement on cottage food labels is not only required but critical for those consumers avoiding certain ingredients.

Questions

Q: Do I have to sell my empanadas already baked or fried, or can I sell them raw for consumers to cook at home?

A: Raw empanadas cannot be sold as cottage foods because they are potentially hazardous and would require refrigeration.

Q: Are both flour and corn tortillas allowed?

A: Yes, both types of traditional tortillas are allowed.

Q: Can there be other ingredients added to my tortillas to flavor them? (i.e. spinach or tomato)

A: Ingredients such as dried or cooked purees of tomatoes, pepper, or spinach, can be added but not as fresh (raw) ingredients.

Q: Can I sell tortilla chips?

A: Yes, tortilla chips are allowed.

Resources

- Colorado Farm to Table Food Safety
<http://farmtotable.colostate.edu/prepare-cottage-foods.php#.VktOZtKrSCg>
- Colorado Farm to Market
<http://cofarmtomarket.com/>



Colorado Cottage Foods: Empanadas and Tortillas (cont.)

Colorado Cottage Foods Act

Colorado Senate Bill 12-048 allows individuals to produce, sell, and store a limited number of specific, non-potentially hazardous 'cottage food' products, in a home kitchen. Cottage food businesses require no license or permit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and are not inspected by any state or local government entity. Products must be sold directly by the cottage foods operator to an informed end consumer and gross sales for each product produced must not exceed \$10,000 annually. Sales outside of the state of Colorado are prohibited.

Allowed Cottage Food Products in Colorado

A limited range of foods that are non-potentially hazardous and do not require refrigeration are allowed. These foods include spices, teas, dehydrated produce, nuts, seeds, honey, jams, jellies, preserves, fruit butter, flour, baked goods including candies, fruit empanadas and tortillas, and pickled fruits and vegetables.

General Labeling Requirements

A cottage food operation may only sell products offered with a label containing the following information (printed in English):

The identification of the cottage food product →	Chocolate Chip Cookie
The producer's name →	Joe Baker
The address at which the cottage food was produced →	123 Safe Food Ave. Anywhere, CO 80XXX
The producer's current phone number →	303-555-1234
The producer's current email address →	jbbaker@cookie.com
The date on which the food was produced →	Manufacture Date: March 15, 2017
A complete list of ingredients →	Ingredients: Enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine, mononitrate, riboflavin and folic acid), butter (milk, salt), chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, butterfat (milk), soy lecithin as an emulsifier), walnuts, sugar, eggs, salt, artificial vanilla extract, baking soda.
The exact disclaimer →	DISCLAIMER: This product was produced in a home kitchen that is not subject to state licensure or inspection and that may also process common food allergens such as tree nuts, peanuts, eggs, soy, wheat, milk, fish and crustacean shellfish. This product is not intended for resale.

Food Safety Training

Although a cottage food kitchen does not require licensure, the producer does need to obtain food safety training. The Colorado Cottage Food Act requires *"a producer must take a food safety course that includes basic food handling training and is comparable to, or is a course given by, the Colorado State University Extension service or a state, county, or district public health agency, and must maintain a status of good standing in accordance with the course requirements, including attending any additional classes if necessary."*

Trainings that CSU Extension offers include face-to-face as well as online classes, varying in length and cost. Contact your CSU Extension county office available at: <http://extension.colostate.edu/> for information on class offerings near you, or visit the Colorado Farm to Table Food Safety website at: <http://farmtotable.colostate.edu/prepare-cottage-foods.php>.

Resources:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: <http://cdphe.state.co.us> and Colorado Farm to Market: <http://cofarmtomarket.com>

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