



ALLERGEN CONTROL & SANITARY PRACTICES

From time to time, we get a variety of questions related to our manufacturing processes and quality standards. Many of these questions concern the handling of “nuts” and the potential for cross contamination. As most of you probably know, “nut” allergies can be fatal. So, the question has some serious ramifications. Although allergen control is certainly crucial, so are the closely related issues of sanitary processes, procedures, and equipment.

Tami Van Hoy holds us to the highest possible standards of operation. The American Institute of Baking (AIB) sets this standard for the baking industry. This is the equivalent of ISO 9000 or HACCP for the food industry. The AIB guidelines are much more demanding than any other Government agency. Not only do we submit to inspection by the Texas Department of Health (TDH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), but we follow the principles of the AIB.

As a brief summary, we:

- ♥ Wash and sanitize all utensils and equipment before and after each use.
- ♥ Wash and sanitize our hands prior to handling any utensils or food ingredients.
- ♥ Wash and sanitize all food contact surfaces throughout each shift.
- ♥ Wash and sanitize the entire production area, including floors and walls, daily.
- ♥ Wear clean aprons, gloves, and hair nets while in any exposed product areas.
- ♥ Do not allow any exposed jewelry in the production area.
- ♥ Store all ingredients and finished products in a climate controlled facility, and in accordance with AIB standards, to prevent insect and rodent contamination, and to maximize shelf life of our products.
- ♥ Lot code all mixes, by the hour, so that we can trace a product all the way back to our suppliers, if there were ever a problem detected, or if a recall were necessary.
- ♥ Keep extensive records on all raw materials received and finished goods produced.
- ♥ Sample every product, every hour during the production process, for consistency, quality specifications, and preparation performance.
- ♥ Retain samples for twelve months for future reference, should there be a complaint about a given lot number.
- ♥ Do not produce any product with peanuts, the most serious nut allergen. In fact, we have sourced pecan suppliers that can assure us that there are no peanuts produced in their pecan facilities, either.
- ♥ Produce products on shared equipment with tree nuts.*
- ♥ Produce products in a facility that also processes tree nuts.*
- ♥ Produce products that may contain nuts.*

*For customers with tree nut and other allergies, these items are used in our products. Although we use our best efforts to keep these items separate, it is impossible to guarantee that any Homemade Gourmet® products are completely free of any allergen. Cross contamination may occur between ingredients (airborne dust). Based on our product mix and preparation, we cannot guarantee that any items are completely free of any allergen.”

We hope this answers all of your questions regarding our processes. Like everything else we do at Homemade Gourmet®, we go miles beyond what is required in order to make sure that your experience with us far exceeds your expectations.