

Edible North Dakota — Freelance Contributor Guidelines

Last updated: September 12, 2025

These are practical, plain-English guidelines for freelance writers, recipe developers, and photographers. They are not a legal contract. By submitting work, you confirm you've read and will follow these guidelines. Questions? Email info@edible.nd.com before you start.

1) What We Publish

- **Written features & profiles:** 800–1,200 words (print). Short web stories: 400–700 words.
- **Service pieces:** 500–900 words (how-tos, buying guides, seasonal roundups).
- **Recipes:** Clear, tested, home-cook friendly. Headnote + ingredients + method + tips.
- **Photography:** People, farms, kitchens, plated dishes, process shots, ingredients, landscapes, restaurants.
- **Tone:** Warm, curious, accurate, positive, North Dakota-forward. Celebrate producers and place. Avoid jargon and unverified health claims. Social topics should be inclusive and informative and not positioned as side taking.

2) Pitching & Assignments

- **Pitch first.** Email 1-2 paragraphs: story idea, why it matters now, sources, personal connection, estimated word count, and whether you can provide photos.
- **Original work only.** Please do not submit work that has already appeared in other publications. If you have covered the topic before make sure you have a new angle or Edible ND angle.
- **Diversity of voices.** We welcome pitches from all communities in food and agriculture.

3) Deadlines & Process

- **Typical timeline:** Pitch → assignment → first draft due **3–4 weeks** later → edits (1–2 rounds) → fact check → layout.
- **Recipe testing:** Test at least once (twice if complex). Note any special equipment or hard-to-find ingredients.

- **Fact-checking:** Provide full names, titles, spellings, locations, dates, and source links in comments or a separate notes file.

4) Writing Standards

- **Style:** AP Style for grammar and capitalization (local exceptions allowed). Spell out “percent.” Avoid exclamation points.
- **Attribution:** Quote and cite experts, growers, and sources. Get on-the-record permission for any sensitive claims.
- **Conflicts:** Disclose financial or personal ties to businesses you cover.

5) Recipe Format (required)

- **Title** and (if applicable) **subhead**.
- **Yield** (e.g., “Serves 4” or “Makes 12 cookies”).
- **Time:** active and total (e.g., “Active 20 min; Total 1 hr”).
- **Ingredients:**
 - List in order of use.
 - Use U.S. volume; add gram weights when helpful.
 - Note divided amounts and temperatures.
- **Method:** Numbered steps; one action per step; include doneness cues (“edges golden, centers set”).
- **Notes:** substitutions, make-ahead, storage, allergens (e.g., contains dairy, tree nuts), and sourcing tips.
- **Credit:** If inspired by/adapted from another recipe, include source and link. For close adaptations, obtain permission.

6) Photography Standards

- **Deliverables:** 8–20 finals per story (mix of horizontal/vertical), include at least 1 opener and 2–3 detail/process shots.
- **Technical:** JPG or TIFF, **300 dpi** at print size; RAW files on request. Minimal edits; no heavy filters.
- **Color:** Shoot in natural-looking light. Avoid mixed color casts.
- **Captions & IDs:** Provide a simple caption and complete IDs for people, places, products, and dishes.
- **Releases:** Photographers are responsible for model/property releases when applicable.
- **File naming:** EDND_YYYYMMDD_Slug_Creator_001.jpg (e.g., EDND_20251115_Lefse_MGoodman_001.jpg).

7) Rights & Usage

- **First serial rights** to Edible North Dakota for initial publication (print and digital), plus non-exclusive archival and promotional use across our channels (website, social, newsletter, event materials).
- **Creator retention:** You retain copyright. After **120 days** from our publication date, you may republish elsewhere with credit: “First published in *Edible North Dakota*.” Please notify us of subsequent publication.
- **Exclusivity:** Please don’t post full text or full-resolution images prior to our publication. Teasers and BTS are welcome—tag us!

8) AI & Editing Tools

- **Writing & recipes must be human-authored.** You may use AI and search tools for brainstorming, outlining, grammar, or clarity. Final work must be original and fact-checked by you.
- **Photography must be real photography.** AI-generated images will not be considered.
- **Disclose tool use** that materially shapes content.

9) Payment, Invoicing & Paperwork

- **Rates:** Set per assignment (recipes, words, photos). Your editor will confirm fixed rate upon agreement.
- **Kill fee:** By prior agreement only.
- **Invoices:** Submit after acceptance (or publication, as assigned). Include assignment title(s), deliverables, and W-9 on file.
- **Payment window:** Net **30 days** from invoice receipt (unless otherwise agreed).

10) Ethics & Sustainability

- **Accuracy:** No plagiarism, fabricated quotes, or paid placements. If paid placement was used as part of story, discussion with editor is required and will require disclosure.
- **Sourcing:** Prioritize local and seasonal where possible. Be transparent about sponsorships and samples.
- **Respect:** Obtain permission before entering private property or photographing others unless in public setting. If you are photographing minors, gain permission from guardian.

11) How to Deliver Files

- **Text:** Google Doc or Word; share with commenting enabled. Include a brief dek/summary and pull-quote suggestions.

- **Recipes:** Submit in our recipe template (we will provide).
- **Photos:** Deliver via shared folder (Drive/Dropbox). Include a contact sheet PDF or thumbnails if possible.

12) Credits & Bio

- Provide a **40-100 word bio**, headshot, plus one social link (FB or IG). Include exact **credit line** for photos.
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Quick Checklist Before You Submit

- ☐ Pitch approved and scope/word count confirmed
- ☐ Sources verified; conflicts disclosed
- ☐ Recipe tested and formatted; allergens noted
- ☐ Captions, IDs, and releases included
- ☐ File names and specs correct
- ☐ Bio with headshot complete
- ☐ Invoice prepped with W-9 on file

Thank you for helping us tell North Dakota's food stories with care and craft.