Cracker Barrel 'Modern' Makeover Angers Fans

Cracker Barrel has long been a staple for fans of nostalgic Americana. Since its first location opened in 1969, the restaurant chain's rustic wood paneling, over-decorated walls, and homestyle cooking comforted diners nationwide.

However, the iconic brand is undergoing a transformation that is drawing up the battle lines of controversy. A recent video showing a revamped Cracker Barrel interior is soliciting strong reactions online, with many loyal customers lamenting the loss of the classic aesthetic they've grown to love.

Why Is Cracker Barrel Ditching It's Classic Experience?

Cracker Barrel continues to face declining customer numbers as the brand has hiked menu prices while budget-conscious diners cut back on eating out. In response, the chain decided to modernize its restaurants to win back some business. On May 16, Cracker Barrel announced plans to remodel 25 to 30 locations during its 2025 fiscal year, starting in late summer 2024.

Cracker Barrell CEO Julie Felss Masino felt that the brand had become irrelevant and said the company was testing various changes to improve the customer experience. These include a new color palette, updated lighting, more comfortable seating, and simplified decor. The retail areas within the restaurants are also being reorganized, with traditional lattice dividers replaced by open bookcases to enhance sightlines and displays.

Masino emphasized that the goal was to update the look while maintaining Cracker Barrel's traditional essence. However, this reassurance has done little to pacify fans who aren't quite vibing with the new digs.

Cracker Barrel Faces Fan Fury Over It's Modern Makeover

While the Cracker Barrel CEO claims the "guests and employee feedback has been highly encouraging," social media users beg to differ. Fans of the brand have taken to platforms like Instagram, where a recent viral video is giving them a platform to voice their displeasure.

One user commented, “Ugly, dull, dreary, and drab. Why is everything turning into this bland and uninteresting mess? If cold and sterile prisons are your vibe…. Have at it. But seriously, everything turning into this uniform beige and gray with no style or art… it’s alarming.”

Another nostalgic customer wrote, “That's not my Cracker Barrel, I want all the old pictures, and I want to feel like I’m going back in time when I walk in. I want that old country store and a rustic feeling.”

Folks are clearly passionate about the atmosphere where they gobble up their Old Timer’s Breakfast, and they feel the new design sacrifices the unique, cozy atmosphere that has made Cracker Barrel a beloved dining destination for decades.