

Cracker Barrel's Offering a New Sausage Option. The Response is Bananas.

In an effort to keep up with the times and serve a profitable market segment, southern-style comfort-food restaurant chain Cracker Barrel recently added a new item to its menu.

"Experience the out of this world flavor of Impossible [TM] Sausage," the "Old Country Store" announced in an August 1 Facebook post, accompanied by a photo of two of the plant-based patties.

Responses across thousands of comments vary from gratitude to "meh, I'll stick with the real thing" to ... well, here's a somewhat representative sample from commenter "Barry Deaton":

"I just want to know why all these companies feel that they have to follow the leader on all of this crap. Cracker Barrel is a great company and they got great Without Woke Meat. Get the message most people don't want this crap. You are only appealing to a small percentage of people. I still love Cracker Barrel but please stick to your roots."

Yes, there are even calls going around for a boycott.

My priors were, thankfully, not confirmed when I clicked on a link to a piece by minister Brett Younger at *Baptist News Global* titled "Are left-wing radicals pushing Cracker Barrel to the edge of the slippery slope?"

"They call it 'comfort food' for a reason, writes Younger. "It makes us feel comfortable. The latest silliness is not about sausage but fear of change. Social media magnifies our foolishness, so we need to think about which wars are worth fighting."

Can I get an amen?

Cracker Barrel isn't "going woke." Cracker Barrel is noticing a market opportunity and hoping to profit from it.

Somewhere between 5% and 10% of Americans (depending on which poll you look at) consider themselves "vegetarians" or "vegans."

More than one in five Americans say they're eating less meat, mostly for health reasons.

That's a lot of people buying and eating a lot of food.

If I had to guess at Cracker Barrel's demographic focus, I'd guess it's on the high side — lots of early Gen Xers and Boomers, many of whom have been told by their doctors to cut

back on the meat (especially red meat) for heart health, to reduce cholesterol levels, etc. — and families with internally diverse dietary needs and preferences.

That's why Cracker Barrel's menu already includes options like chicken sausage links and egg whites.

Let me emphasize: Options!

You can still get "Grandpa's Country Fried Breakfast": "Two eggs with choice of Breakfast Side plus Country Fried Steak or Fried Sunday Homestyle Chicken. Served with Biscuits n' Gravy."

You can still get the "Country Boy Breakfast" — three eggs, sirloin steak AND ham, and biscuits with gravy.

They're not going to chain you to a chair and force-feed you egg whites and Impossible [TM] Sausage.

You could also drive through Burger King and order an Impossible [TM] plant-based Whopper, or the original with a beef patty.

Or you can sit at home and eat spinach, or chocolate-covered pork rinds.

Relax. Variety and choice are the spice of life. And the exact opposite of "woke."