

# Cracker Barrel

## Old Country Store



Back of House Employee Training Manual

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## About Cracker Barrel

Cracker Barrel was founded in 1969 in Lebanon, Tennessee. Since then the company has grown into more than 608 stores in 42 states. Our menu is based on traditional southern cuisine with the appearance and decorations of our stores designed to look like an old fashioned general store. Each restaurant features a front porch lined with wooden rocking chairs, a stone fireplace, and artifacts from the local area. Cracker Barrel is known for its partnerships with country music artists, and has received attention for its charitable activities, such as its assistance of victims of Hurricane Katrina and injured war veterans.

# **Chapter 1**

## Uniforms and Overview

# Uniforms and Overview

## Uniforms

Proper uniform is very important, it encourages a cohesive and productive work group and shows that you have pride in your work. The uniform for cooks is a white button up shirt, ironed, short sleeve or long sleeve with stars indicating PAR training level on the collar, with black or khaki pants, ironed, a black belt, black socks, and black closed toed non-slip shoes, with a white apron. Cooks who has attained PAR 3 or higher are eligible to wear a white chef's jacket.

## Front of the House vs. Back of the House

Employees are broken up into two main groups each with a few sub groups. Servers, hosts, and cashiers are all front of house employees, while grill cooks, dishwashers, prep cooks, and back up cooks are all back of house employees. As a cook you will be working in the back of the house.

## Jobs in the Back of the House

In the back of the house there are many different positions that a cook may work in. There are grill cooks who cook the meats, eggs, and pancakes. There are dippers who work at the steam table putting the sides on the plates, operate the fryers, and prepare the orders to go out. There are prep cooks who make the salads, plate the soups, and prepare the deserts. Also backup cooks who cook the pans of sides, like green beans, pinto beans, and corn, in large kettles they also cook the meat loafs and chicken pot pies. During busy times there are two employees working in the backup area one of them does the regular backup duties while the other makes the breads like biscuits and corn bread. Don't forget about the dishwashers without them the cooks would have no clean plates to put the food on or pans to cook in.

## Work Areas

There are many different pieces of equipment in the back of the house you will need to know how to properly use most of them so let's break it down by area. First we have the grill line where you will be starting. On the grill line we have the steam table, this holds the sides and vegetables that can be precooked. All the food on the steam table should be at a temperature of 170 degrees. Below the steam table is a place for bus tubs where we put dirty dishes, next to the steam table are the hot holds which are used to keep meats such as bacon hot when they are batch cooked during peak times. Opposite the steam table are the fryers the oil in the fryers is kept at 350 degrees so be careful. Between the fryers is another hot hold for batch cooked steak fries and okra during peak times. On each of the hot holds is a 15

minute timer which should be used every time food is placed in the hold as 15 minutes is the maximum time food can be in the hot hold. After this amount of time the food must be thrown away. On either side of the fryers is a set of grills, moving outwards from the fryers the order is, egg grill 225 degrees, meat grill 350 degrees, and bread grill 400 degrees. The meat grill is the largest and is used the most. Below the grills is a set of six refrigerated drawers that hold the different meats. Opposite the grill, next to the steam line hot holds, is the sandwich cooler that holds the toppings such as lettuce, tomato, pickles, and the like. Now moving farther down the line we get to the prep area where they make the salads, desserts, and soups. Just around the corner from the grill line farther towards the back of the store is the backup area. Here the backup cook prepares all of the vegetables and other precooked items held on the steam line. The backup cook is also responsible for cooking the biscuits and corn bread.

## **Order of Training**

### **Dipping**

We will start your training on the steam line. Dipping is easier to master and good dippers are very important as they are the ones to communicate with the servers and they keep the whole grill line on time.

### **Grilling**

After mastering the steam line you will be trained on the grills. You will have an excellent understanding of how orders are put together and should be beginning to understand the different amounts of time required to cook different items. This understanding is critical to properly stagger the cooking of different items on the grill tickets to ensure that all parts of the order are finished cooking at the same time.

## **Chapter 2**

### General Information

## General Information

### Reading Tickets

There are two main types of tickets that print on the grill line. The first and simplest to prepare are the “dip tickets” which can be prepared using only the items on the steam table. The other kind is “grill tickets” which require some items to be cooked. The differences between these tickets are shown by the color of the text that is printed on the tickets. Dip items are printed in black text while grill items are printed in red. A “dip ticket” is printed entirely in black and a grill ticket has some of the items printed in red.

### Staggering Orders

Cooking items on the grill tickets in the proper order is very important if you are going to get the orders out on time. Some items such as grilled chicken tenderloins take only two minutes to cook while others like plain hash browns take six minutes. If you cook the chicken first then start the hash browns by the time the hash browns are done the chicken will be cold and the order will be late.

### Types of Plates

From fruit dishes to platters there are many kinds of plates in use in the kitchen and each one has its specific uses. Fancy Fixin’ entrées go on a platter while lunch specials go on a dinner plate. Most vegetable sides go on the plate but a few like apples will go in a fruit dish on top of a liner next to the plate. Sides of dumplings are soupier and will need to be put in a bullion bowl on the side. In the morning oatmeal is put in a cereal bowl on top of a seven inch plate.

### Day Specific Items

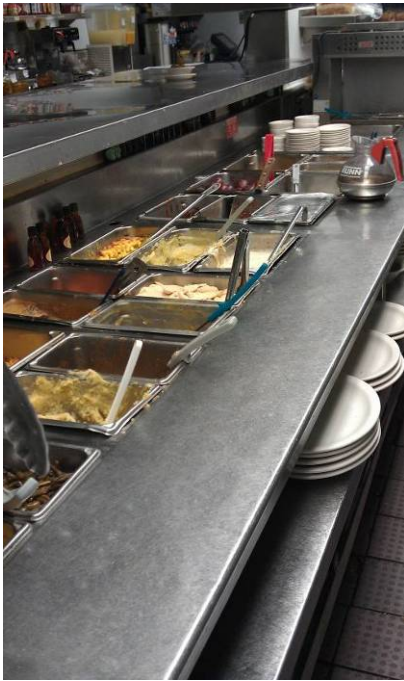
Cracker Barrel has many daily specials including lunch and dinner items. Some days have more than one item such as the Friday fish fry which is either fried catfish or fried cod. Depending on the time of day and days of the week that you work you will be taught more about these different items.



# **Chapter 3**

## Dipping

## Dipping



**Breakfast or Lunch and Dinner**



### Setting up

The steam line is set up slightly differently for breakfast than it is for lunch. For breakfast (on the right) several of the steam wells in the middle of the table are filled with extra fruit dishes and liners for the breakfast set-ups of grits and gravy. For lunch and dinner (on the left) the steam line is filled with vegetables and the extra dishes are not needed.

### Pre-Dipping

As discussed earlier there are dip tickets and grill tickets, dip tickets are passed to the dipper immediately, are made and then sent out. Grill tickets go to the employee working the grill first so that they can start cooking the grill items then it is passed to the dipper. When these grill tickets are passed to the dipper the entrée items are not done cooking but the dipper begins plating up the sides right then so that when the grilled items are ready they can be put right on the plate and sent out the window saving time

**Finishing Tickets**

When a ticket is finished with all the items plated and put on the tray put the tray in the window and call out the table number. The servers will come finish their preparations and take the food to the table.

**Daily Specials**

Many of the daily specials such as the chicken pot pies, turkey lunch special plate, and meatloaf lunch special plate are dip items. When working the steam line it is the job of the dipper to plate these items at the proper time during the order preparation.

# **Chapter 4**

## Frying

## Frying



### Timers

On the shelf above each of the fryers is a timer. The buttons are all labeled for each specific item. Loose items like steak fries, okra, and shrimp should be put in a basket to be fried. Whole items like the home chicken breasts or chicken fried steaks can simply be put into the grease and removed with tongs.

### Using Hot Holds

In between the pairs of fryers is a hot hold which will keep batch cooked foods hot while they wait to be plated for orders. There is also a timer on the hot holds and it is very important to use them every time because fried foods start to get soggy after 15 minutes and should not be sold.

## Daily Special Cart



This is the cart we use for our daily specials that are fried. At the moment it is set up for the home chicken, Sunday dinner special. On the right is the raw chicken breasts, in the middle is the batter, and on the left is the breading. There are a few other daily specials that use this cart, Friday fried cod is one example. The bags of batter and breading for each of the specials are labeled and kept in the dry stock area. This picture shows the proper way to set up the cart.

# **Chapter 5**

## Eggs

## Eggs



### Setting Up

When setting up the egg grill, first make sure it is at the proper temperature. Next make sure it is clean and oiled. Then check the amounts of eggs, cheeses, plates on hand to make sure you have enough to get through the rush. Now with everything in place it is time to discuss the different types of egg products that we offer here.

### Types of Eggs

Firstly our most popular item is the whole eggs. These are used for everything from scrambled eggs to eggs in a basket. Next are the cholesterol free egg beaters, which come in 5oz cartons. We also have liquid eggs for cooking French toast and hard boiled eggs but neither of those are cooked on the egg grill.

### Cooking to Order

There are many different ways that a guest could order their eggs to be cooked. For scrambled eggs you will need to break the whole eggs into the scrambling bowl, beat them with the whisk then cook them. For eggs sunny side up, over easy, medium, and over well crack the eggs onto the grill and cook them appropriately. For sunny side up do not flip the egg let the white cook completely. For over easy flip once and remove from the grill before the yolk and the white around it are



cooked. For over medium flip once and cook until all of the white around the yolk is cooked but leave the yolk runny. For over well break the yolk on the grill and cook the egg completely. Eggs in a basket is a piece of bread with a whole cut in it buttered and placed on the grill with an egg in the middle cook easy, medium, or well. Poached eggs are more time consuming and difficult so when an order for them comes in start on it immediately. The eggs should be placed in the egg steaming pan filled with boiling water on the grill and cooked until they are easy, medium, or well.

## **Chapter 6**

### Meats, Sandwiches, Pancakes

## Meats, Sandwiches, Pancakes



### Setting Up

Like setting up the egg grill the first thing a grill cook should do is check the temperature of the meat grill. Next make sure that the grill is clean scrape off any grease or oils from previously cooked orders. After preparing the grill itself you will want to make sure that the station is properly stocked and ready for the upcoming shift. Check the refrigerated drawers below the grill check the sandwich toppings and make sure that there is plenty of pancake batter prepped. Keep plenty of plates ready; running out of clean plates in the middle of a rush is almost as bad as running out of food.

### Equipment

When working the meat grill there are a few more pieces of equipment than the egg grill. There are more grills and more spatulas. There are also grill weights, butter dispensers, and pancake batter guns. For cleaning the grills we have a scraper, high temperature grill cleaner, and grill screens for cleaning really stuck on foods.

### **Staggering Orders**

While cooking it is important to properly stagger the foods that you cook so that everything for an order finishes at the same time. During a rush this is even more important because a late ticket on the grill will slow down the whole line and it is very hard to get caught up. The timers above the grills are in order left to right starting with the longest time, hash browns, going to the shortest time, sugar cured ham. Here is a quick list to help you remember: plain hash browns, catfish and well done steaks, haddock and well done hamburger steaks, medium steaks/hamburger steaks, grilled chicken tenders and pancakes, sausage and trout, bacon, and finally ham. Poached eggs, while an egg product, are boiled in a pan on the meat grill because it is much hotter helping the eggs to cook faster. Poached eggs do not have a designated timer and are cooked different lengths depending on the order; your trainer will show you the procedure for these.

### **Batch Cooking**

Often right before the breakfast or lunch rushes a manager will ask you to batch cook a few sheets of bacon or several orders of sausage. This means that they want you to cook that amount of those meats and place it in the hot holds to be ready for the upcoming orders. Cooking ten orders of bacon one at a time when the orders come in would take too much time and effort. During the Sunday breakfast/lunch rush especially there is no extra time to spare. For this reason an experienced grill cook will cook three or four sheets of bacon at one time. Batch cooking at the right times throughout the rush will ensure that you always have fresh product to send out and will help you to keep the ticket times down because you will not have to stop for every single order of bacon or sausage.

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