

Presenter: Maybe you brought something from home. Because our research also told us that on average you bring food from home 3 times a week.

Interviewee 1 : That's just some pasta made last night

Interviewee 2: A hummus sandwich

P: But where do you eat it?

Interviewee 3: at my desk

P: That's where most of us head- our desks. Something that became very clear when we took our microphone round the office of the World Service at Broadcasting House

Interviewee 4: Unfortunately I'm eating at my desk which I shouldn't be doing, I should take a little break.

Interviewee 5: We need a discussion about lunch.

P: A serious discussion about something that in other countries is seen as part of the working day, whether in Kenya, France or as one Briton found, in the Netherlands. Hello, Adam (Hello)

This is Adam Semanenko, who recently moved to Amsterdam from Bristol as a web developer in a small design company. I'm on skype with Adam and it looks as though the place is pretty well equipped, there's a coffee grinder in the background, there's a fridge, a kitchen table.

Adam: All the ingredients except the bread get delivered. We pick up the bread from a local bakery and today that includes a couple of pies. You know, around midday, someone musters up courage to get out some plates and people will just start making sandwiches and we've, actually, a new addition is a couple of stoves.

P: So you can actually cook things at lunchtime can you? It's quite adventurous, not just sandwiches. Can we talk to some of your colleagues?

Adam: This is Caroline, she's got a sandwich in her mouth.

P: Caroline, is this sort of communal sandwich making normal in the Netherlands?

Caroline: Yeah, it depends on the company of course but most medium sized companies, yeah, do make their sandwiches together.

P: So you don't know about the culture of buying sealed packets of sandwiches and eating them at your desks?

C: I can imagine but I've never participated in that sealed sandwich tradition.... Quality is quite good and not soggy or ..

P: How long do you take for your lunch, half an hour, one hour?

C: Yeah, it also depends on how busy you are and if you're chatting with your colleagues, usually half an hour to an hour, it depends. I really don't watch the time.

P: How much does it cost, your lunch?

A: 2 or 3 Euros a day

P: What a bargain.

C: Yeah, when there's enough food it's a bargain. Sometimes we run out of things to put on your bread then people start nagging. I put peanut butter on it and now I'm going to put sambals on it, a sort of pepper paste from Indonesia. Adam is looking like he needs to vomit.

P: It sounds very nice. Well, happy lunchtime. Well after that lunchtime snapshot, I wasn't surprised to find that what little research has been done shows a positive link between eating together and increased productivity. A 15 month study of 50 American fire stations in the US by Cornell University showed that people who ate together were better at their jobs. Perhaps

it's studies like these and a keen eye on what worker happiness can add to the bottom line that's led the globe's big tech companies to make their food offer a key part of their employment policy and no one is more on that ball than Google.

Graham smith: If you work for Google, you eat for free.

P: Graham Smith works for google in its Silicon Valley campus.

GS: There are many cafeteria spread around the campus. We call them restaurants and each one has a theme and different food. The one in my building has chicken and rice entrees, soup, sandwiches, pizza and even one of those conveyor belt sushi bars. I eat at work every day breakfast and lunch and sometimes dinner.

P: That ambitious menu was originally invented by Charlie Ayres, former executive chef at Google HQ.

Charlie: What I went for was fresh local ingredients, organic as much as possible, there was a lot of fish and seafood that I would serve on a regular basis. I created the illusion you were everywhere else except work really opulent food and all kinds of entertainment and everything from electronic dance music to live performances from Bono and the Edge.

GS : Some might see this all as needless expense but I think they knew what they were doing. Dinner doesn't start until 6 pm so it's easy to convince yourself to work late

Charlie: it just became a catalyst for them to work more. You had the mail girl sitting next to the CEO sitting next to a group of engineers sitting next to some salespeople so they could exchange ideas and that cross-pollination went on and now that is standard. After I left the company, I went and helped Facebook set up their operation, I helped Dropbox, I helped Paypal, I helped Palantir and all these companies wanted the same thing and they realised food was the epicentre. Everyone eats.

GS: If you wonder if you can eat at Google the whole time, the answer is yes. I've heard stories of engineers with emptier refrigerators.