

THE GHOSTS OF LUNCHES PAST

The etiquette of the office repast.

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In today's fast paced office environment it's often hard to find time to head out of the cave into the (hopefully) sunny world beyond for a lunch break. With so many demands on those precious working minutes it is not always possible to take that elusive break, and one can often find themselves eating fast food bent over the keyboard at their desk.

The best solution to achieve a healthy and, on the whole, cheaper lunch is to bring the food in with you. Even if you can't leave the office you know you always have something healthy to hand. Some people allocate a fruit or snacks drawer in their desks, while others bring in prepared platters fit for a king. Whichever the preferred choice however, it's always important to bear in mind that you're not the only person in the office. Forgetting you brought your lunch in so that it becomes an overgrown mass of furry fingers in the fridge for someone else to clean is a bad idea.

Should you choose to consume fish pie for lunch, you could be permeating the whole office with your luncheon's smell. Such smells can spread faster through the office than rumours about the boss

sleeping with the secretary. With such an eclectic mix of food on the market however, what most offices experience is a climactic whiff of various soups, sandwiches, and any number of home-made leftovers cooked up in the hazardous zone of the office microwave. The ghosts of such smells can be smelt for days on end, especially if your office is a window free zone. You therefore sentence your co-workers to at least a two hour wafting period if you have a fragrant lunch, as well as inflicting this on innocent entrants into your office environment. How then does one prevent this nausea occurring?

For a happy smell free working environment, etiquette denotes that one's choice of lunch is very important, especially if you are the only one aiming to eat something with a powerful smell. One pregnant woman in Boston who found the lunch smell too much to take would rub her hands with a strong smelling hand lotion to sniff whenever she felt queasy. This is however an impractical solution for most, but some help can be found in the side bar to this article. ■

■ CLEAN UP:

Don't leave your food or the lunch leftovers sitting out for others to see and smell.

■ RUBBISH:

Put smelly rubbish in a bin outside the office, so the smell does not continue to emanate from the bin.

■ BREATH:

Check your breath after eating potent produce. Chewing gum is a risky option for the telephone, mints are the way forward!

■ BREAK:

Everyone can afford at least five minutes away from the desk outside. It's good for the concentration as well as office politics.

