

[▶ Listen Live](#)

[Learn about KUOW and the future of 88.5 \(http://kuow.org/pacific-lutheran-university-announces-intent-sell-kplu-885-fm-uw-s-kuow-public-radio\)](http://kuow.org/pacific-lutheran-university-announces-intent-sell-kplu-885-fm-uw-s-kuow-public-radio)

These coworkers sit down for lunch every day – and they're still productive

By [CAROLINE CHAMBERLAIN \(/PEOPLE/CAROLINE-CHAMBERLAIN\)](/PEOPLE/CAROLINE-CHAMBERLAIN) & [BILL RADKE \(/PEOPLE/BILL-RADKE\)](/PEOPLE/BILL-RADKE) • MAY 11, 2016

[Twitter \(http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fzg5bjm8&text=These%20coworkers%20sit%20down%20for%20lunch%20every%20day%20%E2%80%A2\)](http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fzg5bjm8&text=These%20coworkers%20sit%20down%20for%20lunch%20every%20day%20%E2%80%A2)





(http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kuow/files/styles/x_large/public/201605/10255289_10153345160442500_183353429965149704_n.jpg)

Peter Miller and his colleagues cook and prepare lunch together every day at Peter Miller Books.

COURTESY OF KATE MURPHY

BRIGHT WATER
WALDORF SCHOOL

PS-8 Enrolling
now for fall 2016



On historic Capitol Hill
www.brightwaterwaldorf.org



Listening...

5:00 / 12:23



Mesothelioma Attorneys

206.957.9510 /
888.647.6007



BERGMAN
DRAPER
LADENBURG
HART

bergmanlegal.com



You probably already know this, but lunch these days is sad. This is especially true when it's eaten during the workday. Frequently, it's eaten alone, at the desk while answering emails.

There's research to back lunch's retreat into sadness.

June Jo Lee is a Bellevue-based food ethnographer with the Hartman Group, and she found in her studies that Americans identify lunch at work is the most dissatisfying eating occasion.

She's not the only researcher saying that.

NPR reported that only one in five (<http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/03/05/390726886/were-not-taking-enough-lunch-breaks-why-thats-bad-for-business>) American workers takes a lunch break away from their desks.

Lee said that's partly because we don't have access to fresh food. In some workplaces, there's no kitchen or designated eating place.

But really, the sad, shrinking American lunch hour is about a larger shift.

“As a society, as a culture we don't value the lunch hour anymore. So what typically happens is, people look at your schedule and they see that between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. it's open. So what we're seeing is a lot of meetings scheduled during the typical lunch hour,” Lee said.

So how did we get to this point?

Lee argues that it's due to a number of factors, but that it can be mostly attributed to the fact that we're working more. Meanwhile, we've shifted from a cooking culture to an eating culture.

"There's less focus on planning, preparation. And when you don't have plans made, and you're not thinking about what you're going to have for the next meal, you don't know what you're going to eat until you're hungry," she added.

But there are tradeoffs. Skipping the lunch hour could mean you make it home faster to spend time with your family.

Lee argues that while that's true, the other side of that is workers now feel pressure from those around them to work during lunch.

"If everybody took lunch, nobody would be working during that hour. And maybe we wouldn't miss that extra hour of productivity. And maybe it's not so much productivity, maybe we're wasting our time," she said.

In any case, she believes that however you choose to spend lunch, it should be a deliberate choice and not an immediate reaction to hunger. She also encouraged employers to enable their employees to take their lunch break.

One boss who has done so is Peter Miller, owner of Peter Miller Books (<http://www.petermiller.com/>) near Pike Place Market. He and his coworkers make and eat lunch together every day.

"If you take that break, the afternoon becomes a separate segment. You're refreshed. It's a little bit like washing your face and hands. Everything just for a moment felt better," he said.

So if it's better, how do you go about making it with the limited resources of office kitchens?

"It's sort of an act of what we call 'cooking over the shoulder of a meal,'" he said. In other words, he and his coworkers coordinate. A meal is oftentimes a combination of what someone has prepared already and what can be easily picked up by a local market.

Lunch at Peter Miller Books often consists of a base of lentils, pasta or rice that are cooked beforehand combined with fresh ingredients that can be prepared that day like avocado and a fresh squeeze of lemon. He has a cookbook with many of the recipes they make called “Lunch at the Shop.”

Miller said this has a surprising, positive effect on his employees.

“Every one of them is pleased that at the end of the week, there’s \$50 that they didn’t spend for lunch,” he said.

But most of all, he believes the social benefit makes his work lunches worth it.

“It creates its own world, just for a second,” he said.

Linguine with pancetta, basil and cherry tomatoes







http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kuow/files/styles/x_large/public/201605/LunchAtTheShop_p081.jpg

CREDIT COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER HIRSHEIMER AND MELISSA HAMILTON

A very workaday pasta — you can even make it as you are washing the dishes from dinner. This recipe reproduced with permission from "Lunch at the Shop," by Peter Miller. Serves four.

- salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 1/4 pound pancetta, cut into strips
- 1 dried hot red pepper
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound linguine or spaghetti
- 12 cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon cold butter
- 12 to 16 small basil leaves

Keep at the shop:

- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- salt

- freshly ground black pepper
- olive oil

At home

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.

In a medium sauté pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté until it begins to color but not burn. Remove and discard the garlic. Add the pancetta and the red pepper and stir to coat them in the oil. Add a grind of black pepper, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until the pancetta begins to crisp.

Add the linguine or spaghetti to the pot of boiling water and cook until al dente, following the guidelines on the package. (As you learn this dish, you will have the pasta cooking even before the pancetta has crisped.)

Rinse the tomatoes and add them, still wet, to the pan with the pancetta. Cook, stirring, for no more than 1 minute.

Drain the pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of the cooking water, and then quickly add the cooked linguine to the pan with the tomatoes and pancetta. Stir to coat, season with a little salt, and quickly stir in the butter. Add the basil and fold into the pasta. If the mixture is too dry, very quickly add some of the reserved cooking water and toss.

The pasta will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days.

At the shop

Reheat the pasta until it is quite hot. Sprinkle some of the parmesan on top, then taste and season with salt and pepper, as needed. Just before serving, drizzle the pasta with a little olive oil. Use forks to serve the pasta, so it will sit loose and slightly separated on the plate. The last ingredients have a much greater effect if added fresh at the very end, rather than at home.

Variation: This dish would also be a wonderful pasta salad, in which case, reheat the pasta for just a moment. Add 4 or 5 fresh cherry tomatoes, halved and salted, just before serving.