**Want A Free Lunch? Work For Facebook**

The dot-com bubble has long since burst, but one Silicon Valley perk is alive and well: free lunch. Rori Gallagher takes us behind the scenes of one well known company's kitchen.

JOSEF DESIMONE: Vichyssoise.

RORI GALLAGHER: One of the most popular cooks in Silicon Valley is Facebook's executive chef and self-designated culinary overlord, Josef Desimone. His bustling kitchen serves 1,300 lunches a day - more than some restaurants serve over the course of a week.

DESIMONE: Unidentified Man: Then we go to scampi?

DESIMONE: Unidentified Man: Okay.

GALLAGHER: Desimone was on track for a successful career in San Francisco's competitive restaurant world but then Google came calling. At first, he wouldn't even consider a job as a corporate chef. To him, that was the easy way out - with weekends off, repeating menus and canned ingredients. But he changed his mind in 2003.

DESIMONE: And when I went to Google, it was nothing like that. It was completely the opposite. It was all free-range, it was all organic. It was everything that the restaurant I was working at couldn't afford to be.

GALLAGHER: Five years later, he started the Facebook culinary program from scratch.

DESIMONE: We do a brand new menu every single day, every single meal period from a different region of the world, which, you know, I don't know any restaurant that does that.

GALLAGHER: The fare ranges from Italian to Korean to Scandinavian to Northern Indian. He says that variety is essential for Facebook employees.

DESIMONE: Changing the menu and being so diverse with it is great, because we got people here from all over the world, you know, and I'm sure a lot of them are homesick. They're from Sweden, he's from India, he's from - but what I can do is bring a little slice of what you're used to here.

GALLAGHER: Facebook employees Sara Brooks and Joanna Lee are chowing down on wasabi mashed potatoes and tofu steak today.

SARA BROOKS: I've always found something that I can eat every day really safely, and that makes me really happy.

JOANNA LEE: It also makes for a healthier environment. So, you know you have healthy options in the workplace instead of, you know, grabbing a bag of chips or grabbing fast food.

GALLAGHER: But health and happiness are not the only things high-tech companies care about when they start an in-house meal program. It also helps with looking for new talent, as we Lee has seen firsthand.

LEE: I definitely think it's a perk that's difficult to compete with and almost like a standard now in Silicon Valley.

DESIMONE: You know, Google offered food - all of a sudden, they were the engineering mecca. Facebook offered food and all of a sudden, same thing. You know, they become the engineering mecca. There's a reason for that. It's a great recruiting tool.

GALLAGHER: For NPR News, I'm Rori Gallagher in Palo Alto, California.