BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
The English We Speak
Something to chew on

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei
Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei.

Neil
And I'm Neil.

Feifei
Hey Neil, would you like to try one of my homemade cookies?

Neil
Well, we shouldn't really eat while we're presenting but… go on then…

Feifei
I made them last night and I thought I'd try them out on you! You've got a sweet tooth so I know you can't resist!

Neil
OK then… Mmmm.

Feifei
Well, what do you think?

Neil
Well, they're… OK. Perhaps not the best I've ever had.

Feifei
Oh, so you think my cooking isn't great?

Neil
Let's say it's something to chew on.

Feifei
Right! So you're saying my homemade cookies are chewy?

Neil
No, I'm not. In fact they're… crunchy. But when someone says they need to chew on something, it's an informal way to say they need to think about it before making a decision.

Feifei
Well, Neil, I will chew on a response to your insult about my cooking while we hear some examples…

Examples
Our extension plans are great but we need to chew on it before we give them the go-ahead.

Hmm, it's very expensive to fly to Australia for a holiday. Let's chew on it shall we?

My boyfriend asked me to marry him and I said I'd chew on it. He didn't seem that pleased!

Feifei
This is The English We Speak and Neil has been using the expression 'to chew on something' or 'something to chew on' which means to 'think about something before making a decision'. And Neil, I've made a decision about what to say to you!

Neil
Oh yes?

Feifei
If you don't like my cooking, I will *not* be inviting you to my dinner party tonight.

Neil
Oh Feifei! Ah well, at least I'll avoid your cooking.

Feifei
I'm not cooking. We're getting a takeaway curry and lots of wine. I suppose you could come… if you pay for the take away?

Neil
Hmm, now that is something I don't need to chew on. The answer's 'no' – I'll stay at home and… bake my own cookies! See ya.

Feifei
Bye.