



This ancient grain is strong and pure and was the staple food of Asian and Mediterranean populations for centuries. Spelt was once considered very precious and the Ancient Romans even used it as a medium of exchange and as an offering at weddings.

With the arrival of other varieties of grain, starting in the Middle Ages, spelt started to become less popular because it was difficult to grow and its yield was not very high compared to other crops. Another reason for the cultivation of spelt being abandoned over the centuries was that spelt flour and other products derived from spelt contain a high fibre content. However, it is for this very reason and for its basic characteristics that spelt is appreciated today and is once again being included in our diets.

The species grown in this territory, precisely at Monteleone di Spoleto, is the *triticum durum dicoccum*, one of three species that differ in the shape of their spike, the colour of their flour, their husk and their caryopsis.

Four types of local spelt can be found commercially:

Whole spelt: This is suitable for side dishes and starters. Before eating, it needs to be soaked for 24 hours and then cooked in boiling water for at least two hours.

Whole, hulled spelt: This needs to be soaked for 12 hours and should be cooked for just over an

hour (time is halved if using a pressure cooker). It is excellent in cold salads and in first courses with a rustic flavour.

Chopped spelt: This does not need soaking, should be cooked for 20-30 minutes and is ideal for soups. After cooking, it is best to leave the spelt to rest for a few minutes before seasoning and eating.

Spelt flour: This is a rustic flour suited to focaccia bread, biscuits and homemade pasta.