

## WHY DO WE HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT WHEAT?

Many people now have issues digesting wheat and other gluten-containing grains. As well as those with medically-diagnosed coeliac disease, there are increasing numbers of people with wheat intolerances or non-coeliac gluten sensitivities. So wheat is often seen as the cause of the problem. But is it *all* wheat? Or is it what has been done to modern wheat that is the problem? Many people believe that the processes of hybridising wheat to grow our modern high-yield wheat crops has changed wheat into a problem food. Cyndi O'Meara's *What's With Wheat* documentary explores this issue further. There is also more information on gluten in our [Gluten Cheat Sheet](#).

## TYPES OF WHEAT

There are many different types of wheat. Most commonly grown are bread wheat and durum wheat. Bread wheat can be "hard" (with more protein, including gluten, and therefore better for bread making) or "soft" (with less protein – better for making cakes and biscuits). Durum wheat is mostly used for pasta making.

But there are also several other varieties of wheat. Many of these are referred to as "ancient grains" because they have not been hybridised or grown to be chemical-resistant in the same way that modern wheat has.

The most widely known of these are:

**Spelt**, which is higher in protein than common wheat and can be used in place of common wheat in most recipes.

**Emmer**, otherwise known as 'farro' or 'grano farro', which has higher amounts of antioxidants.

**Einkorn**, which is prized for having a high protein content and the highest level of lutein among wheat species.

**Khorasan** (also known by the brand name **Kamut**) is an heirloom grain originating from Egypt. It is higher in protein and contains more vitamin E than common wheat.

*It is important to note that while these more ancient forms of wheat are often better tolerated by those with wheat or gluten sensitivities, particularly when prepared using traditional methods like sourdough fermentation, they still do contain gluten, and should not be consumed by people who need to avoid gluten as a consequence of medically diagnosed coeliac disease.*

## WHICH ONE IS BEST?

Many people do not have a problem with consuming wheat, while others are incredibly sensitive to it. But is everywhere; it is our most commonly consumed grain. And it is often used in a highly processed form where it retains little nutritional value. So when I have a choice to use an alternative grain to modern wheat, I do.

I often use spelt flour for general baking. It is easy to find, and a better price than other harder-to-find grains. But each of the types of wheat has its own flavours and properties, so it's a good idea to experiment and see which one works best for you.

# CHEAT SHEET WHEAT

## WHERE CAN I BUY THESE ANCIENT WHEATS?

Many health food stores and online suppliers (such as The Wholefood Collective, Honest to Goodness or Changing Habits) sell these flours, or even whole grains for milling yourself. Spelt is probably the most readily available now, as its popularity has increased, and it can now also be found in many supermarkets.

## HOW SHOULD I USE THEM?

Flours made from these grains can generally be substituted cup for cup for wheat flour in recipes. You may find that they may require a little less or sometimes a little more liquid than regular wheat flour, so adjust recipes as you need to.

**Emmer** can be a bit dense, so you may need to use less and add extra egg when baking. There are some great tips and recipes for using Emmer [here](#)

**Spelt** requires less liquid than regular wheat flour, so you will need to reduce liquid or increase flour by about 10%.

[This guide](#) has some great information to help you. .

Try using spelt in my [Vanilla Cake](#) or [Easy One Bowl Choc Raspberry Cake](#) .

Other tips and recipes can be found [here](#) and in our [Spotlight on Spelt sheet](#)

**Khorasan/Kamut** can require more liquid, especially if being used for bread. Here is a good guide with recipes using Kamut. <https://www.kingarthurfLOUR.com/guides/baking-with-ancient-grains/kamut-flour/>

**Einkorn** also generally absorbs less liquid than wheat flour, so liquid amounts will need to be reduced. Other tips are available [here](#).

As with any new ingredient in your kitchen and in your diet, experiment and see how it works for you. And don't forget to share your successes and struggles with others in the membership!