

## “Spelt Is Wheat”

“Spelt is a subspecies of wheat. The genus-species of modern bread wheat is simply ‘*Triticum aestivum*.’ Spelt wheat is a subspecies belonging to, ‘*Triticum aestivum speltoides*.’ Thus, there is no basis to say spelt is different from ‘wheat.’ The proteins in spelt are essentially identical to those in modern bread wheat; only the amounts are slightly different. Protein sequences known to be toxic to persons with celiac disease have been identified at the gene level in spelt wheat.”  
Scott Bean Ph.D., Research Chemist for the USDA-ARS in Manhattan, KS

‘Gluten’ is the inclusive term for a complex mixture of storage proteins found in grains. There are more than 50 different protein components in hexaploid wheat. When a person with Celiac Disease becomes exposed to specific amino acid sequences of some storage proteins, the immune system is stimulated to attack the body. **All members of the *Triticum* family contain the amino acid sequences.**

The two major wheat species used for food production are bread wheat and durum wheat. However, other triticults were cultivated and consumed historically and are still marketed today. They include spelt, emmer, and einkorn.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Genomes		
Wheat (bread)	<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	A	B	D
Durum (pasta ) wheat	<i>Triticum turgidum var durum</i>	A	B	
Spelt	<i>Triticum aestivum var spelta</i>	AA	BB	DD
Emmer	<i>Triticum turgidum var diccum</i>	AA	BB	
Kamut	<i>Triticum turgidum, ssp. turanicum</i>	AA	BB	

A, B and D genomes of cultivated wheat are derived from related wild grass species of the genera *Triticum* and *Aegilops* and therefore encode the related proteins. **“Consequently, it is not valid to expect any cultivated or wild wheat species to be nontoxic to those suffering from celiac disease despite claims to the contrary.”<sup>i</sup>**

Donald D. Kasarda and Renato D'Ovidio authored an article detailing the subject of spelt in 1999. The article is “Deduced Amino Acid Sequence of an a-Gliadin Gene from Spelt Wheat Includes Sequences Active in Celiac Disease” found in *Cereal Chemistry*, 1999, 76:548-551.

1. The universal recommendation of medical professionals and celiac support organizations is to eliminate ALL forms of wheat from the diet of people with celiac disease.
2. The members of the *Triticum* family do not contain the same percentage of the storage proteins. A reduced level of ‘gluten’ in spelt may not produce any visible symptoms in some celiac patients, but ingestion of those specific amino acids can still produce damage.
3. The only known treatment for celiac disease is a diet free of wheat, barley, rye, and oats and their derivatives. Regular medical visits and periodic lab tests help monitor the health of a person with Celiac Disease.

<sup>i</sup> Michael N. Marsh, MD, DSc, FRCP, Ed. [Celiac Disease Methods and Protocols](#), 2000. Pp 55-57. Humana Press, ISBN 0-89603-650-2,