

## “Grünkern”: From famine food to delicatessen.

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Spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta* L.) was still profusely cultivated across Europe till the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but its production decreased over time. The recent upswing of healthy nutrition and slow food movement, however, has been a boost for the revival of some products that were almost lost in oblivion. That is the case of spelt wheat whose production and consumption have increased over the last decades. Its cultivation had been kept almost anecdotal in some areas of France, Switzerland, Austria and Germany, to be used in specific foods. In Germany for instance, it has been employed for centuries for the production of Grünkern, apparently born from necessity but that has become much appreciated. Grünkern, also called "the rice of Baden", is made with winter spelt, which is harvested unripe and roasted and smoked over a beech wood fire.

The first written reference to Grünkern dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but we suspect that its use has a longer tradition, that we try to document archaeologically. As part of the project PLANTCULT (ERC Consolidator Grant, GA number 682529), our research concentrates on the Bauland region, a gently hilly and open landscape that lies in the northwestern part of the state of Baden-Württemberg and where its preparation has a long tradition. The aim is to document ethnobotanically Grünkern preparation, not systematically recorded to present, and to obtain reference samples from each production stage. These will allow us to produce reference material, that will be used for comparisons with archaeological remains and allow the identification of Grünkern production in the archaeological record.