Lentaculum brevis

The standard Roman loaf throughout the empire was a round flat bread with deeply marked divisions to allow the loaf to be broken by hand into portions. A 500 gram loaf would be divided into 4 segments and a 1kg loaf would be divided into 8 segments.

Emmer flour was used in the early part of the Roman Period and later Spelt flour was used. For an economy loaf, the flour would be mixed with Rye or Barley flour. A sourdough starter would be used, which was a portion of the previous day's dough, watered down and kept warm in a covered bowl or cask. Salt and sugar was very expensive so most breads would be improved with honey or herbs to lighten the sourdough flavour.

500 grams of stoneground spelt flour
Warm water with honey dissolved in it.
Sourdough starter or 5 grams of dried yeast
Olive oil

Mix all of the ingredients in a large bowl and leave to prove for at least an hour. Knock back the dough and dust with flour. Kneed thoroughly and shape into a round flat loaf on a floured baking tray. With a long flat and thin wooden ruler, press the dough deeply into 4 segments. Leave to rise for at least half an hour. Bake in a moderate oven (280°C) for 30 minutes





This type of bread was the standard used by the Roman Legions. A 1 kg round loaf divided into 8 segments was a meal accompaniment for 8 Legionnaires.

This was also the type of bread used at breakfast. The larger loaves (*Lentaculum*) would be sold by the baker at local sales outlets and the smaller loaves (*Lentaculum brevis*) would be made by people who had their own ovens. Many Roman citizens did not have baking ovens at home, so buying bread from the baker was the norm.

The local baker would be a well-qualified member of the *Collegium Pistorum*, having the skill to bake to the highest standard.