



# kitchen cred

With a bit of sisterly advice from **HEATHER GOLDBERG AND JENNY ENGEL**, even the most panicked kitchen-phobe can feel more confident wielding a spatula. Conducting cooking classes in person and online, the Los Angeles-based siblings are also authors of the cookbook *Spork-Fed: Super Fun and Flavorful Vegan Recipes from the Sisters of Spork Foods*, with a foreword by Emily and Zoey Deschanel.

## VT Is there a foolproof way to keep from ruining a dish?

**Heather and Jenny** There are a couple of steps you can take to ensure your recipe comes out well every time. First, taste your dish as you go. Think about creating a balanced flavor: If you taste too much acidity, a touch of brown rice syrup or agave will do the trick. Is your dish bland? Kick it up with vegan Worcestershire sauce, a dash of lemon juice, or some fresh herbs. The other step is to trust your “kitchen intuition”—you have it, even if you don’t know it yet! All pots and pans cook differently, and all ovens tend to have hotspots or little quirks. If something looks or smells like it’s burning, but the recipe says to cook for much longer, don’t wait, remove it from the heat. The more time you spend cooking, the more you’ll develop your intuition.

## VT How can you spark creativity in the kitchen?

**Heather and Jenny** Some peoples’ worst nightmare is improvising. If you’re a recipe follower to a T, then just looking at an eggplant and wondering what to do with it may seem scary. But we’re here to tell you it will all be OK. Start with something you’re comfortable with, like brown rice, and jazz it up with different flavors: for Mediterranean flair, add sun-dried tomatoes, kalamata olives, and basil; if you’re going for a Southwestern style, add grilled corn, black beans, and a hit of chipotle powder. These tiny variations will allow you to turn one dish into many different recipes. And if you taste as you go, you’ll always be pleased with the results, and inspired to get more experimental next time.

## VT Which kitchen tool is a must-have for veg cooks?

**Heather and Jenny** A good-quality chef’s knife makes food preparation easy and pleasurable, and cuts down on the amount of prep time. Our fave is the Wüsthof Classic. Just holdin’ that bad boy makes you feel like a pro!

## VT What’s a tip for preparing your very first Thanksgiving feast?

**Heather and Jenny** Our advice to newbies is to do some advanced prep. Most soups, sides, and desserts can be made a day ahead and warmed on the stove or in the oven before serving. You’ll want to start gathering your recipes about a week before the holiday so that you have time to read them over and write up a complete shopping list. If you head to the market just a few days before Thanksgiving, the lines will be shorter and you won’t have to fight over the last tub of Earth Balance. 🍋