How to Draw a Birthday Cake

12 easy steps for beginners

What you'll need

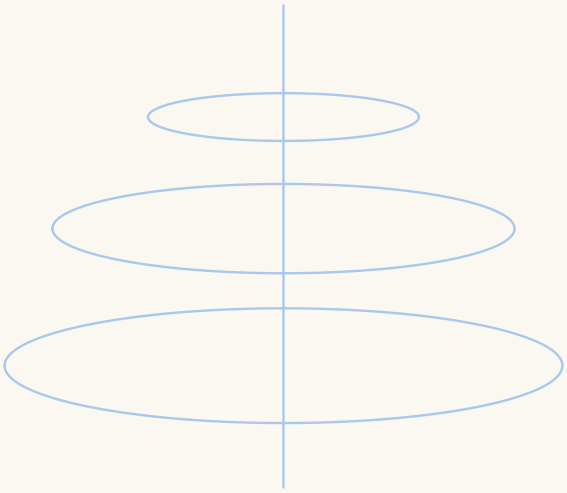
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

How to use this guide

New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

Read the full tutorial online →

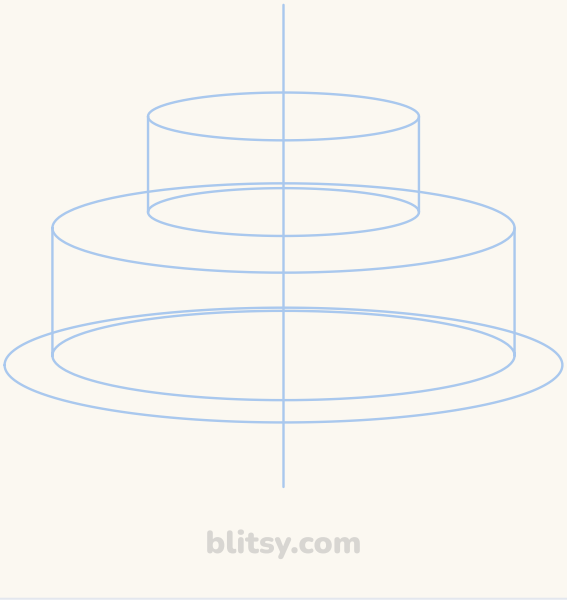
STEP 1 Draw a center line and three ovals



Sketch a light vertical line down the middle of your page. Stack three flat ovals on it: a small one near the top, a wider one in the middle and the widest near the bottom. They become the small tier, the big tier and the cake stand. Keep each oval centered on the line so the cake won't lean.

💡 **Tip:** Draw each oval in one loose, quick loop. Slow ovals come out bumpy.

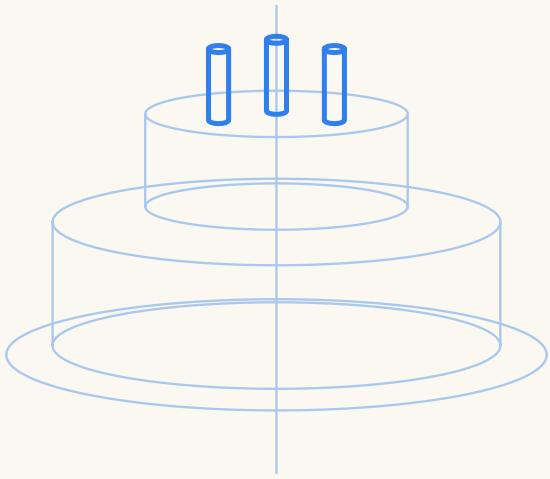
STEP 2 Add the sides and bottom ovals



Here's the cylinder trick. From the left and right ends of the small oval, drop two straight lines down. Then draw a matching oval at the bottom of those lines. Do the same for the middle oval. I make the bottom tier a little taller than the top one, because a heavy base makes the cake look steady.

💡 **Tip:** Keep both side lines perfectly upright. A ruler helps if they start to tilt.

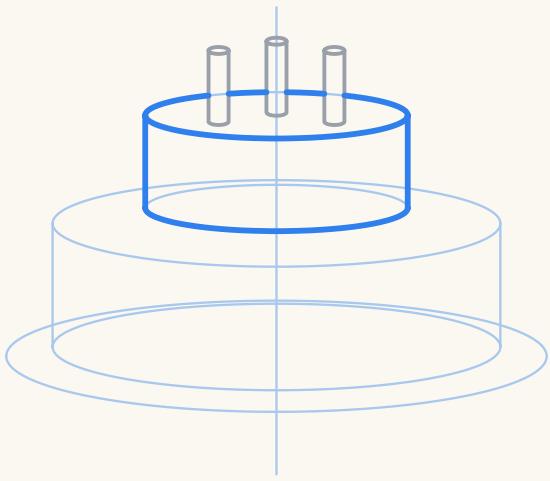
STEP 3 Draw three candles on the top tier



Each candle is a tiny cylinder: a small oval on top, two short sides and a curved bottom. Stand them on the top oval, one in the middle and one on each side, with the middle one a touch higher because it sits farther back. I draw the candles before the tier, so I never have to draw a rim line behind them and rub it out.

💡 **Tip:** Space the candles evenly by eye, then check that the middle one sits right on the center line.

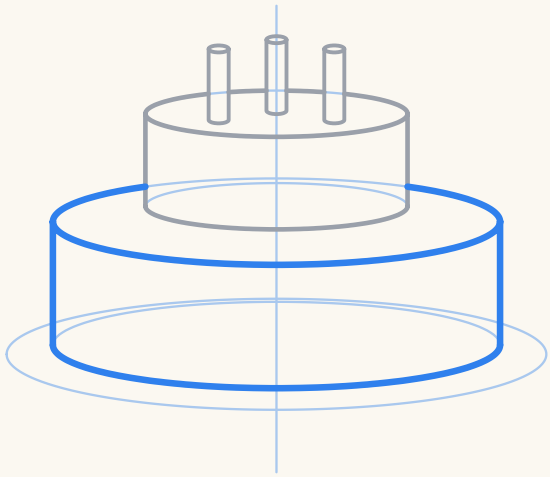
STEP 4 Turn the top guides into the top tier



Now go over the small tier with firmer lines. Trace the whole top oval, skipping the short bits that pass behind the candles. Trace both sides, then only the front half of the bottom oval. The back half of that bottom oval is hidden inside the cake, and leaving it out is what makes the shape look solid.

💡 **Tip:** Press a bit harder than for the guides, but not so hard that you dent the paper.

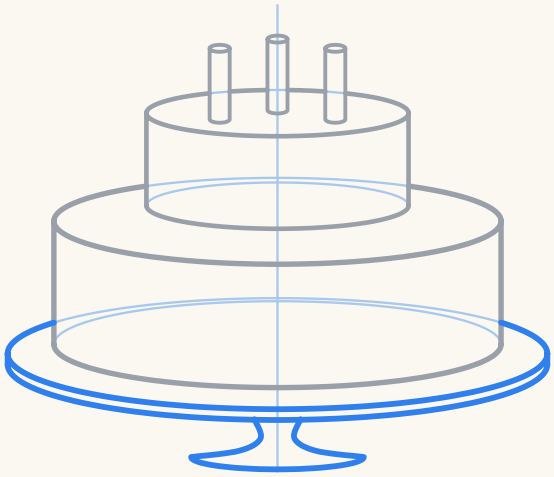
STEP 5 Draw the bottom tier around it



Trace the big tier the same way. This time, the back of its top oval goes behind the small tier, so stop the line where it meets the small tier's sides and pick it up again on the other side. Add the two tall sides and the front half of the bottom oval. Most beginners trace the full oval here and end up with a line cutting through the top tier.

💡 **Tip:** Before tracing, ask yourself which lines you could really see on a real cake.

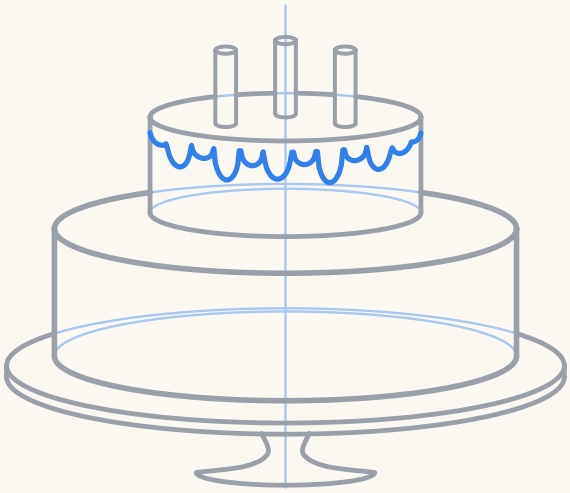
STEP 6 Add the cake stand



Trace the front of the widest oval to make the plate, leaving out the part hidden behind the cake. Give the plate a thin edge with short sides and a second curve just below. Under the middle, draw a narrow stem that flares into a wide, flat foot. I keep the foot about as wide as the top tier, so the stand looks balanced.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the plate edge thin. A thick rim makes the stand look like a second cake.

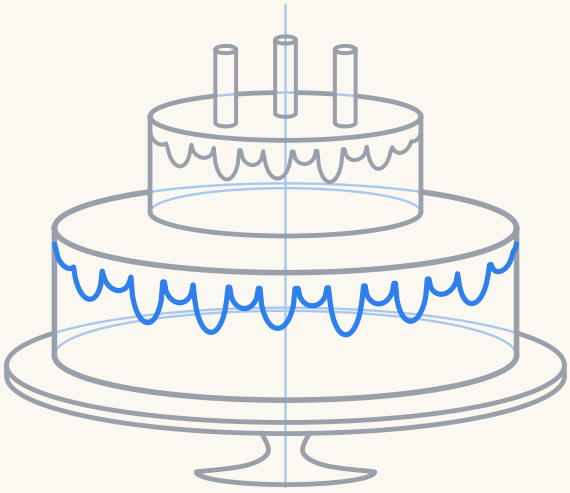
STEP 7 Draw pink frosting drips on the top tier



Start just under the top tier's front edge and draw a wavy line from one side to the other. Let it hang down in rounded drips, some long and some short. Mixing the lengths is what makes frosting look runny. I like to alternate one long drip with one short one, then break the pattern now and then so it doesn't look stamped.

💡 **Tip:** Round off the bottom of every drip. Pointed ends look like icicles.

STEP 8 Add cream drips to the bottom tier



Repeat the drips on the big tier, following the curve of its front edge. I let these drips run longer, because the tier is taller, but I stop them well above the bottom to leave room for decorations. The drip line bends with the oval: lower in the middle, higher toward the sides.

💡 **Tip:** Follow the curve of the rim, not a straight ruler line, or the tier will look flat.

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STEP 9 Top the candles with wicks and flames

Add a short wick on top of each candle. Above it, draw a teardrop flame with a round bottom and a pointed tip, then a smaller teardrop inside it. Finish each candle with two slanted stripes, both leaning the same way. Small flames work best; huge ones crowd the top of the page.

💡 **Tip:** Tilt every stripe the same way so the candles look twisted, like real party candles.

STEP 10 Scatter sprinkles and add a row of dots

On the top tier, under the drips, draw tiny rounded sprinkles pointing in different directions. On the bottom tier, add a row of small circles that follows the curve of the cake, all the same size and evenly spaced. Leave a little gap between the decorations and the drips so nothing touches.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the middle dot first, then work outward to both sides for even spacing.

STEP 11 Ink the cake and erase the guides

Go over every keeper line with your black fineliner, from the candle flames down to the foot of the stand. Give the ink a minute to dry. Then erase the center line and all the guide ovals. The hidden lines vanish and the cake suddenly reads as a solid, round shape.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the long outlines with one steady stroke each, turning the page as you go.

STEP 12 Color the birthday cake

Color the stand light blue first. Fill the bottom cake light pink with cream drips and a cream top. Make the small tier cream with pink frosting. Use light blue, purple, green and yellow for the candles and all the little decorations, and cream for the candle stripes. Orange goes on the outer flames with yellow inside, which makes them glow.

💡 **Tip:** Color the pale shades before the dark ones so your pencils stay clean.