How to Draw a Cupcake

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

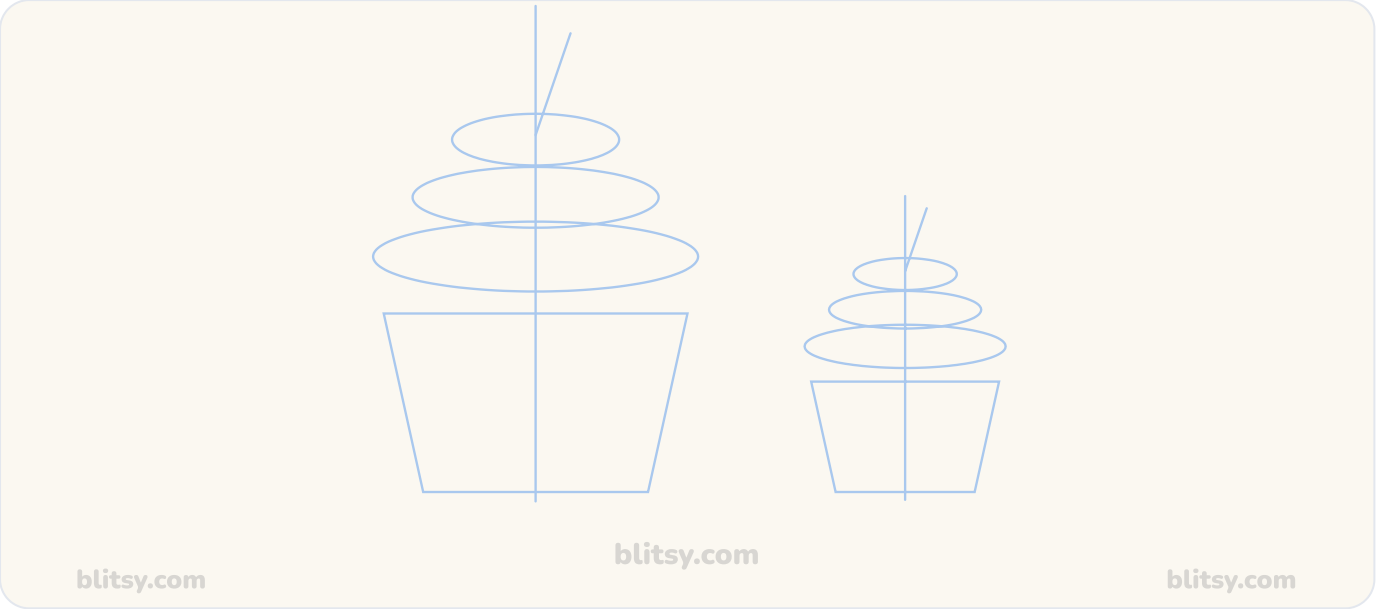
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

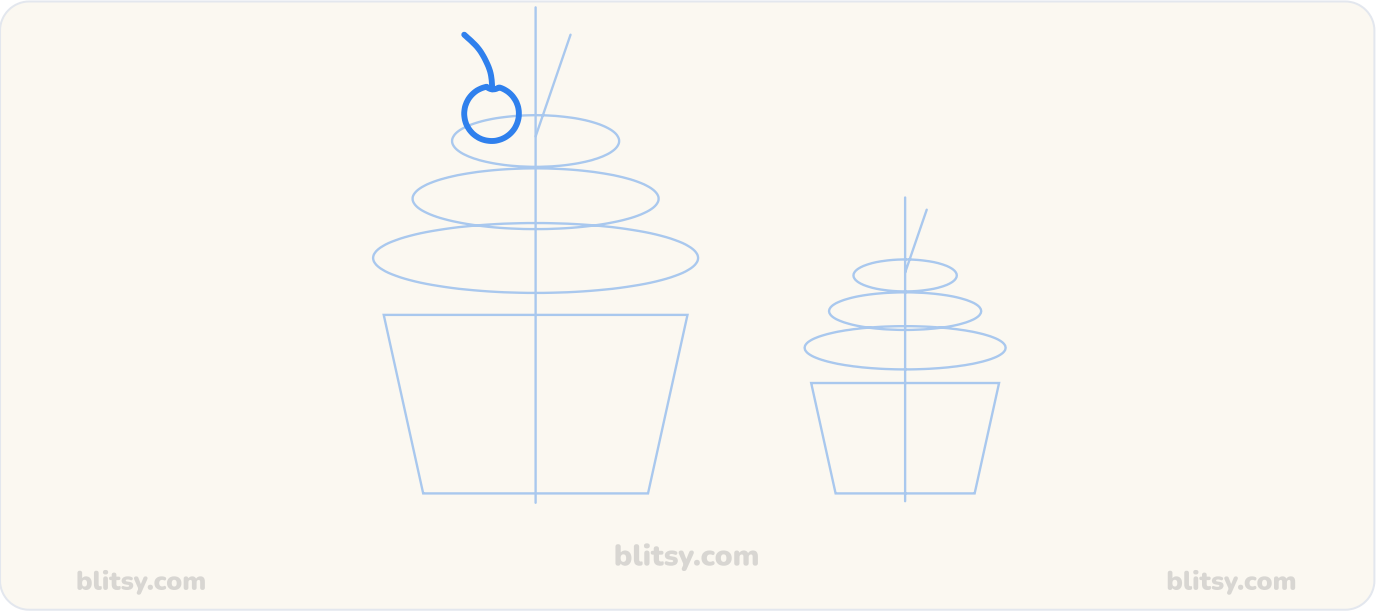
STEP 1 Sketch a cup shape and three ovals



Draw a light vertical line a little left of center. Around its lower half, sketch a trapezoid that is wider at the top than at the bottom: that's the paper liner. Stack three flat ovals above it, each one smaller than the one below, and add a short slanted line on top for the frosting tip. Put a smaller copy of the same guides on the right for the second cupcake.

💡 **Tip:** Make the trapezoid's top roughly a third wider than its bottom. Too much slant looks like a flowerpot.

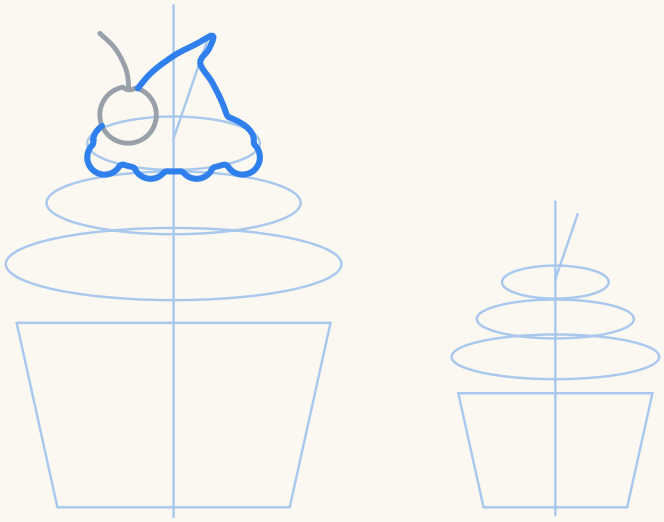
STEP 2 Place the cherry first



On the left side of the top oval, draw a circle about as wide as a fingertip on your page. Give it a small dip at the top where the stem goes in, then pull a curved stem up and to the left. I always start with the cherry, because it sits in front of the frosting. Drawing it first means you never have to erase frosting lines that would run behind it.

💡 **Tip:** Curve the stem in one smooth pull. Two short strokes leave a visible kink.

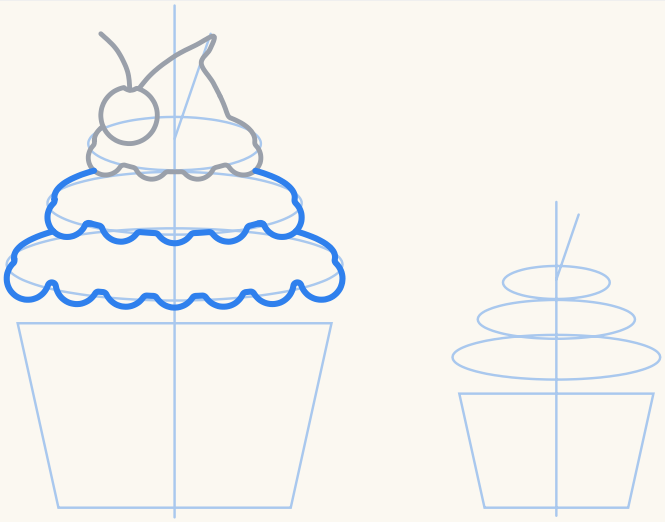
STEP 3 Draw the top tier and the curly tip



Starting from the cherry, draw the smallest ring of frosting over the top oval. Its bottom edge is a row of four soft bumps, a bit like a cloud. From the top of this ring, rise into a pointed tip that leans right and hooks over at the end. Add one curved line inside the tip later; for now keep the outline simple.

💡 **Tip:** Round every bump at the bottom. Sharp points turn soft frosting into spiky leaves.

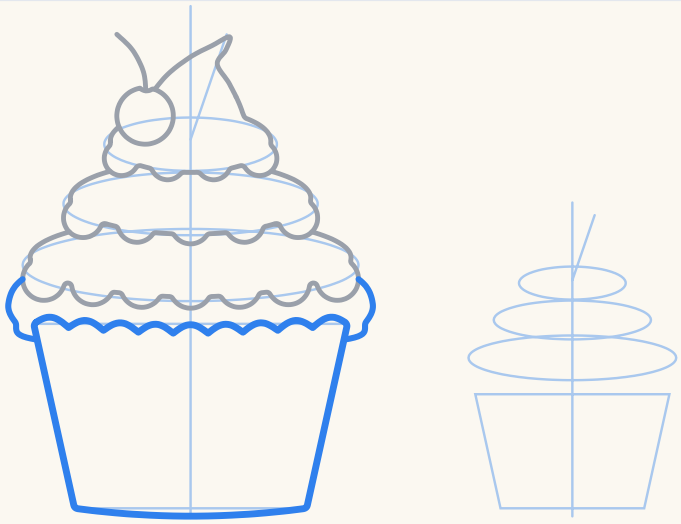
STEP 4 Add the two lower frosting tiers



Under the top ring, draw a wider one with five bumps, then the widest ring with seven. Each new ring tucks under the one above, so start its line where it touches the ring above and stop on the other side. That overlap is what makes the swirl look piled up rather than flat. Most beginners make the rings the same width; let each one stick out clearly past the one above.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the bumps on each ring about the same size so the swirl looks piped by hand.

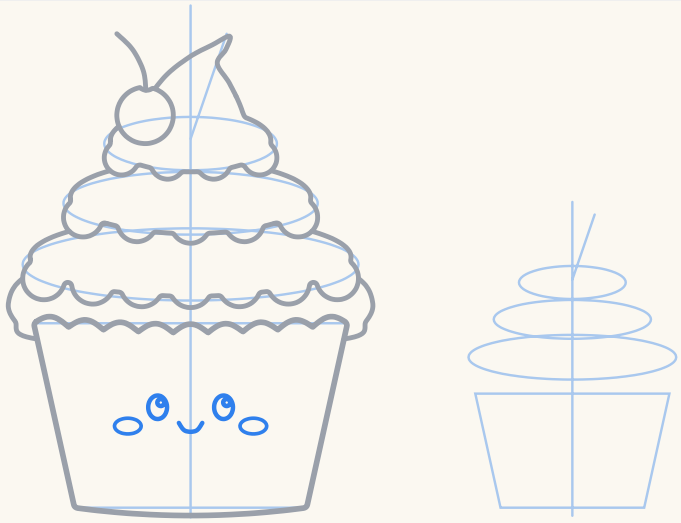
STEP 5 Draw the cake top and the paper liner



Peeking out under the bottom ring, draw a golden cake dome that bulges a little past the liner on both sides, like a muffin top. Then trace the liner over the trapezoid. Give its top edge a row of small bumps, keep the sides straight, and curve the bottom gently downward in the middle. That small curve hints that the cupcake is round.

💡 **Tip:** I show only a thin strip of cake. A tall band hides the frosting.

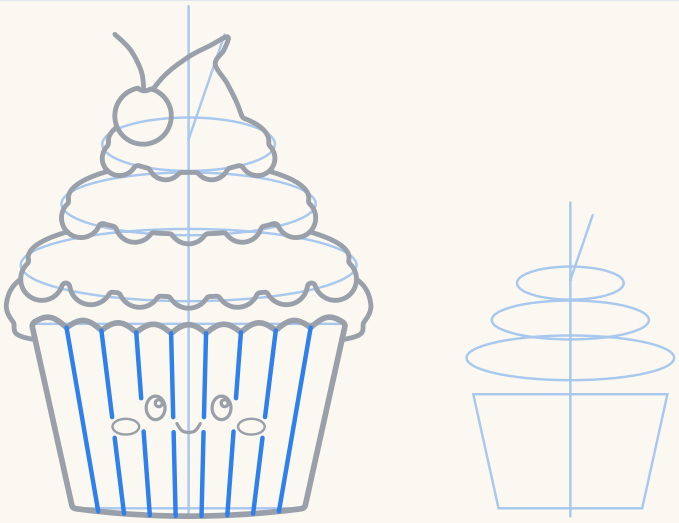
STEP 6 Give the liner a happy face



In the middle of the liner, a little above halfway, draw two tall oval eyes with a tiny circle in each for a sparkle. Set a small U-shaped smile between them and lower down, then add a flat oval cheek under each eye, toward the sides. I keep the features close together; spreading them wide makes the face look surprised rather than sweet.

💡 **Tip:** Put both eye sparkles on the same side, so the face looks lit from one direction.

STEP 7 Add the pleats



Split the liner into nine equal panels with eight straight lines. Start each line at a dip between two rim bumps and run it down to the bottom edge. Because the bottom is narrower, the lines lean in slightly, which is exactly what real paper pleats do. Stop each line just before it touches the face, then continue it below.

💡 **Tip:** Mark the middle line first, then space the others outward in pairs.

STEP 8 Scatter sprinkles and add the shine



Dot short rounded rods over all three frosting rings, tilted in different directions, and leave some space around each one. Keep them off the very bottom of every ring, since that strip gets darker shading later. Add a small oval shine on the cherry's upper left and one curved line inside the tip to show the twist.

💡 **Tip:** If two sprinkles point the same way side by side, turn one of them.

STEP 9 Draw a small cupcake friend



Now repeat the whole build on the right, smaller: three frosting rings with a curly tip, the cake top, the liner with seven pleats, a few sprinkles and a tiny face. Skip the cherry so the two cupcakes look different. I like this step because it tests everything you just learned, and the second cupcake always goes quicker.

💡 **Tip:** Line up both liner bottoms on the same level so the cupcakes stand on one table.

STEP 10 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with your black pen: cherry, frosting rings, cake, liner, pleats, sprinkles and both faces. Let the ink dry for a minute before erasing. Then rub out the center lines, the trapezoids and the ovals. With the guides gone, the frosting suddenly reads as soft and puffy.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the long liner sides with the paper turned so you pull the pen toward you.

STEP 11 Color the cupcakes



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Fill the big swirl pink and run dark pink along the bumpy underside of each ring. Color the cake tops golden yellow. Make the big liner light blue with every second panel in blue, and the cherry red with its shine left white. For the small cupcake, swap the colors: light blue frosting with blue shading, and a pink liner with dark pink panels. Finish with black eyes and bright sprinkles.

💡 **Tip:** Color the pale shades first, then add the darker strips on top so they blend.