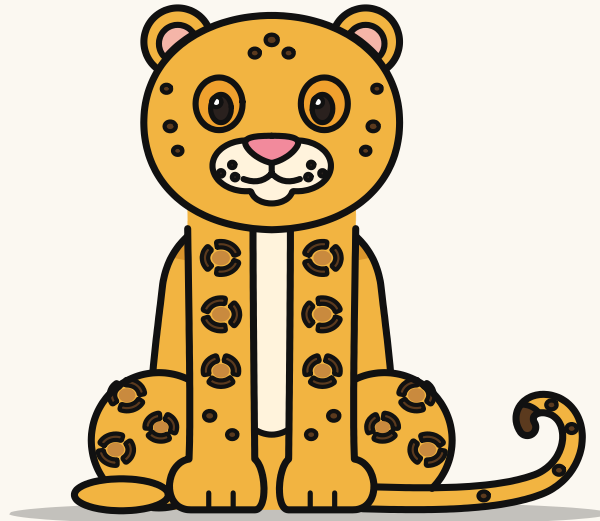


How to Draw a Leopard

12 easy steps for beginners



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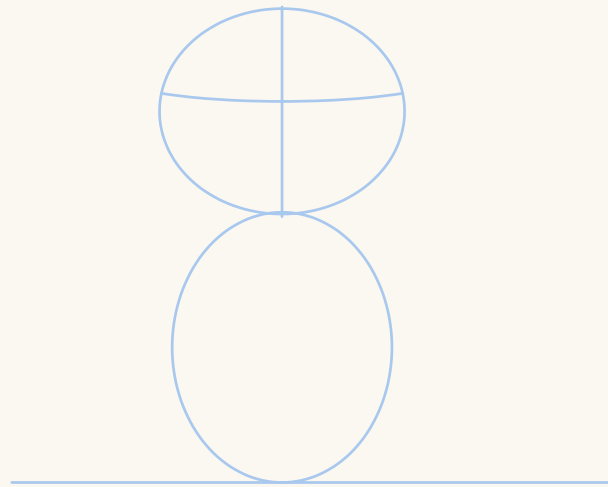
What you'll need

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

How to use this guide

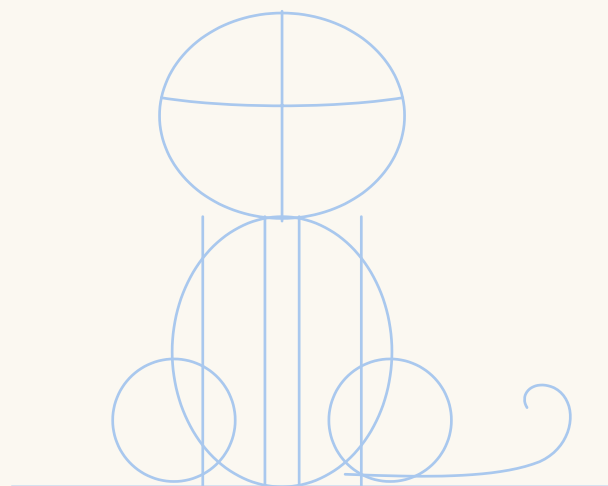
New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Sketch a head circle and a tall body oval

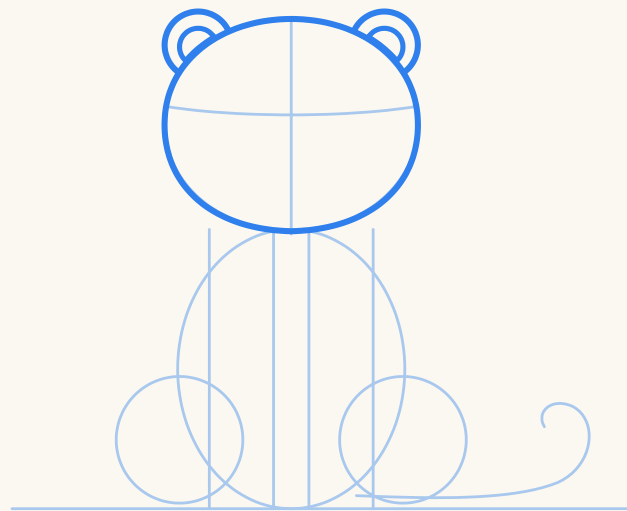
Draw a flat ground line near the bottom of the page. Stack a tall oval on it for the body, then a wide circle on top for the head, just touching the oval. I make the head almost as wide as the body, since a big head is what makes a cartoon animal look young. Add a vertical line through the head and a curved line across it, a bit below the middle, for the eyes.

 **Tip:** Hold the pencil far back from the tip. Your lines will come out lighter without trying.

STEP 2 Add hip circles, leg lines and a tail guide

Put a circle at each bottom corner of the body oval, resting on the ground line, for the back haunches. Drop two pairs of straight lines from under the head to the ground, close to the middle, for the front legs. Finish with one long curve from the right that runs along the ground and hooks up at the end. That's the tail's path.

 **Tip:** Keep the two leg pairs the same distance from the center line so the pose stays balanced.

STEP 3 Outline the round head and small ears

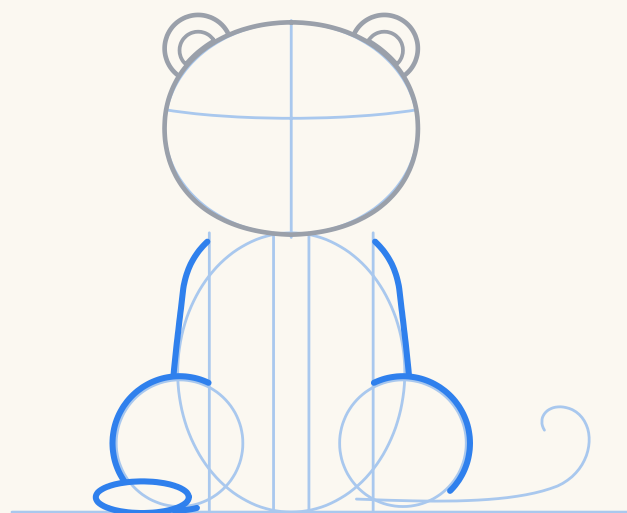
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Go over the head circle with a firmer line, widening the cheeks slightly so the bottom is a little broader than the top. Two small round ears sit on the top corners, each with a smaller circle inside. I keep leopard ears small and round on purpose. Pointed ears quickly turn the drawing into a house cat or a fox.

 **Tip:** Draw the inner ear circles slightly lower than center, it makes the ears look tilted forward.

STEP 4 Draw the body sides, haunches and one back foot

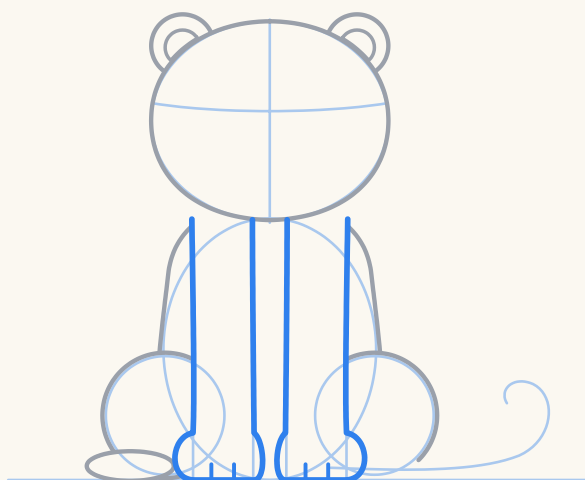
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From under each cheek, bring a curved line down and out for the shoulders, stopping at a hip circle. Trace the outer part of both haunches so they look round. On the left, add a flat oval on the ground for a back foot. I skip the right foot, because the tail covers it later.

 **Tip:** Let the body lines lean outward a little as they go down. A sitting cat is widest at the hips.

STEP 5 Add two straight front legs with round paws

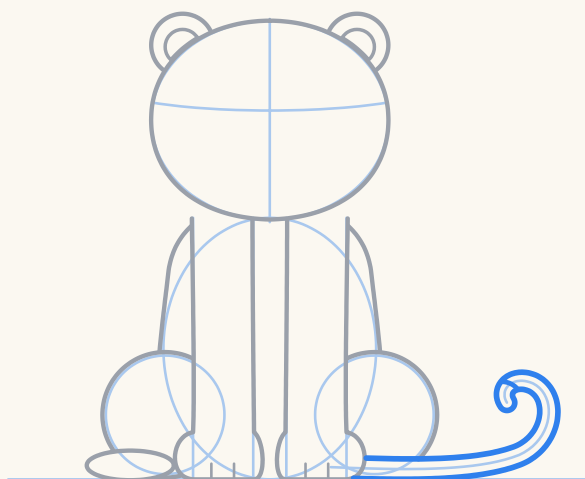
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Follow the leg guides with firm lines from under the chin straight down. Near the ground, swell each leg outward into a rounded paw that's a bit wider than the leg, then draw two short toe lines at the bottom of each paw. Leave a narrow gap between the legs. That gap becomes the cream chest.

 **Tip:** Draw the outer edge of both legs first, then the inner edges, to keep them equally wide.

STEP 6 Curl the long tail along the ground

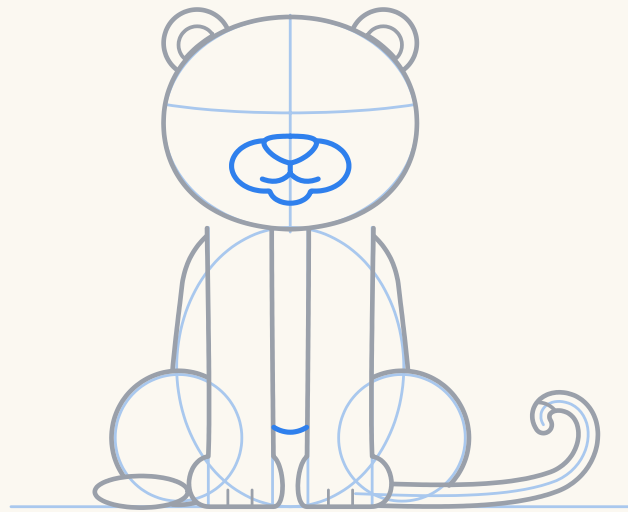
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Start the tail from behind the right front paw. Use two lines about a fingertip apart that run along the ground in front of the back foot, then sweep up and curl back at the end. A short curved line across the tail near the tip marks a darker end. Leopards use their long tails for balance when they climb, so don't make it stubby.

 **Tip:** Turn your paper sideways for the curl. Curves are smoother when your wrist pulls the pencil.

STEP 7 Draw the chest and muzzle with a pink nose

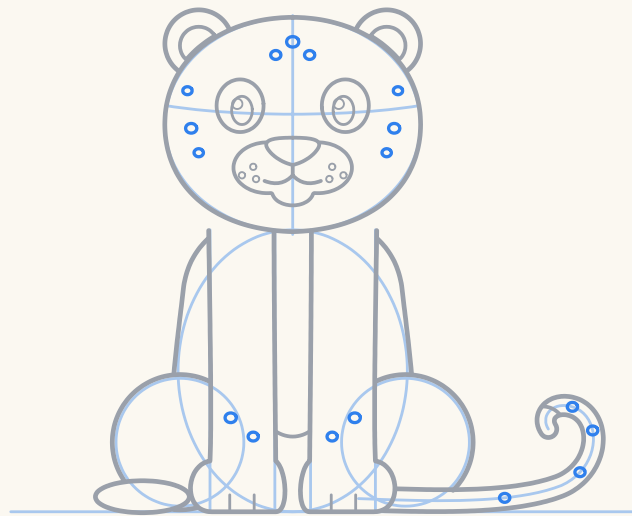
Between the front legs, draw one small curve near the bottom to close off the chest patch. Low in the face, draw two puffy cheek shapes side by side with a tiny chin bump under them. A small rounded triangle nose sits where the cheeks meet, with a short line below it that splits into two smiling curves.

 **Tip:** Keep the muzzle low in the face. If it rides up, the eyes run out of room.

STEP 8 Add big eyes and whisker dots

Place two large ovals on the curved cross line, leaving about a nose width between them. Inside each, draw a taller dark pupil and a small shine circle in the upper left. Big eyes with a shine keep this leopard friendly rather than fierce. Finish with three tiny dots on each cheek puff.

 **Tip:** Put both shine circles in the same corner. Mismatched shines make the eyes look crossed.

STEP 9 Dot in the small solid spots

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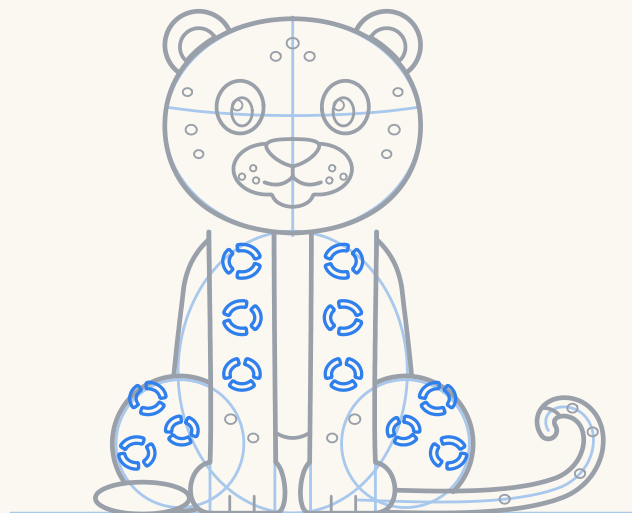
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Real leopards have small, solid spots on the head and lower legs, while the open rosettes cover the body. Put three spots in a little triangle on the forehead and three on each side of the face beside the eyes. Add two spots low on each front leg and a few evenly spaced along the tail.



Tip: Space the spots out like stepping stones. If two touch, they read as one blob.

STEP 10 Draw open ring rosettes

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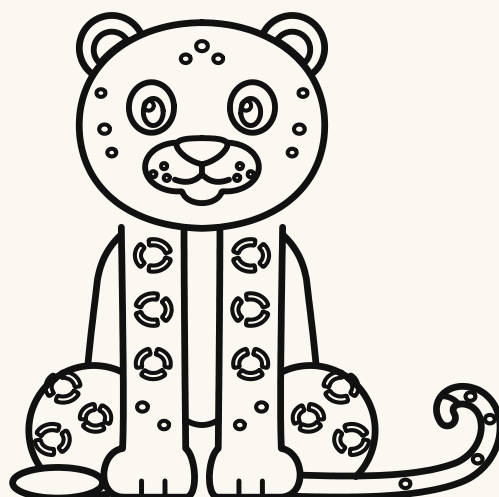
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A rosette is a ring broken into pieces. Picture a small oval, then mark only three short curved dashes around it, leaving gaps. I settled on twelve for this leopard: three down each front leg and three on each haunch. That's enough to say leopard without crowding the drawing.



Tip: Draw one rosette on the left, then its twin on the right, so both sides stay matched.

STEP 11 Ink the outline and erase the guides

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Trace every keeper line with your fineliner. Start at the face, since that's where a shaky line shows most, and do the tiny rosette dashes last with short, slow strokes. Let the ink dry for a minute. Then erase all the circles and guide lines underneath.

 **Tip:** Rest the side of your hand on a scrap of paper while inking so you don't smear the face.

STEP 12 Color your leopard

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Golden yellow covers the fur, from the head down to the tail. Use cream for the chest and muzzle, pink for the nose and inner ears, and orange for the eyes, keeping the pupils black and the shine white. Fill each rosette center with tan, then go over the dashes and spots in dark brown, along with the tail tip. A deeper yellow just under the chin adds a soft shadow.

 **Tip:** Color the tan centers before the brown dashes, so the dark color doesn't get dragged around.