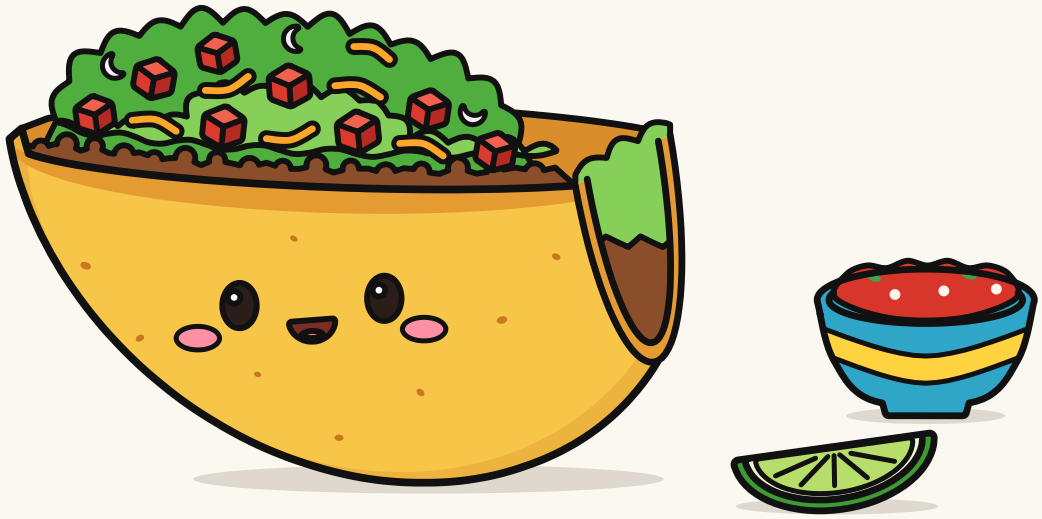
How to Draw a Taco

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

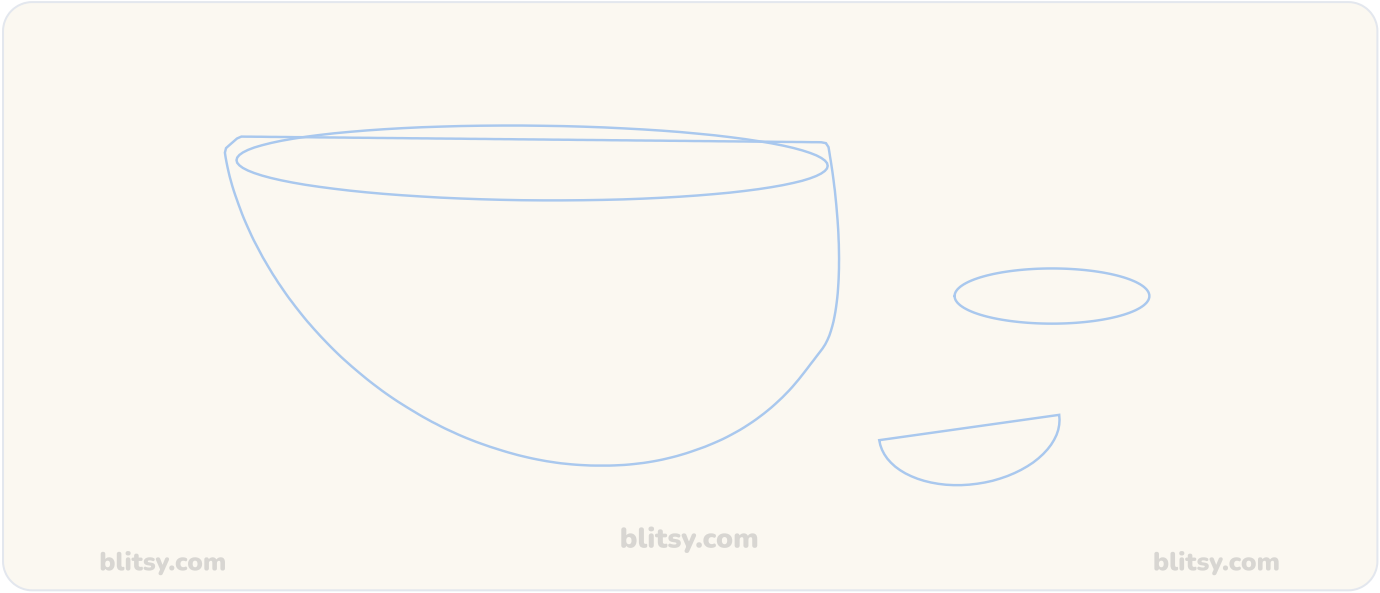
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

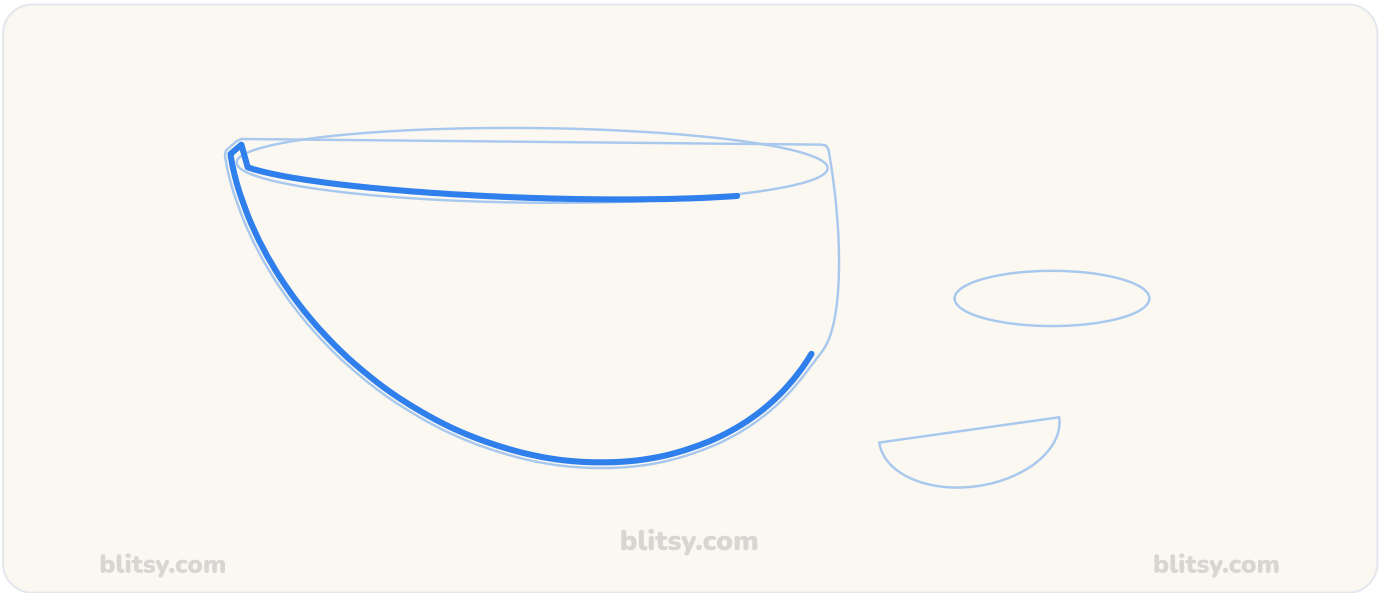
STEP 1 Sketch a half moon and a lid



Lightly draw a big half circle with its flat side on top, a little left of the middle of your page. Lay a long, flat oval over that flat side so it pokes out a bit at both ends: that's the opening of the taco. On the right, add a small oval for the salsa bowl and a half circle below it for the lime. I keep these shapes faint, since they only mark where things go.

💡 **Tip:** Make the half moon about twice as wide as it is tall. Any rounder and it starts to look like a bowl.

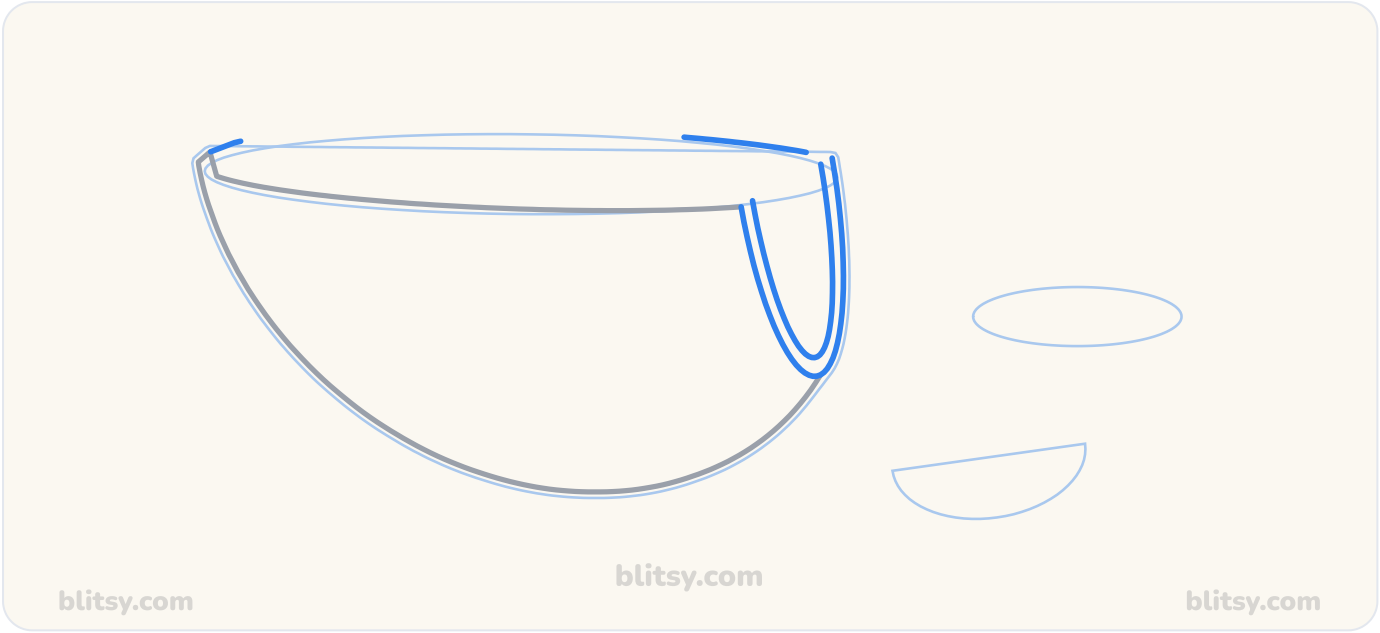
STEP 2 Outline the front of the shell



Trace the front edge of the shell along the lower side of the oval, letting it sag just slightly in the middle. Then follow the guide down and around the curved bottom, but stop before you reach the right end. I never skip that small sag: it shows you're looking down at the taco a little, so the shell reads as round.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the long bottom curve in one smooth sweep, turning the paper if your hand runs out of room.

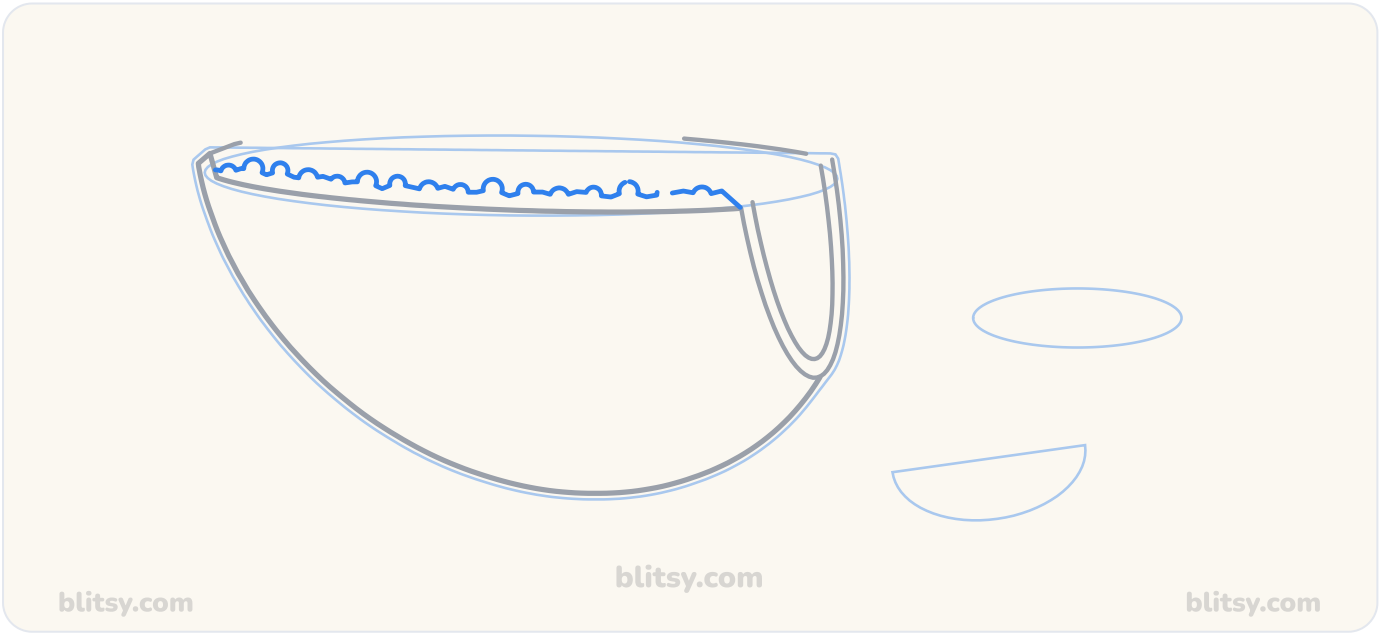
STEP 3 Show the open end and the back rim



At the right end, draw a narrow U that hangs down from the front edge, then a second U just inside it. The space between the two lines is the thickness of the crunchy shell. Next, draw short pieces of the back rim along the top of the oval: one at the far left tip and a longer one on the right. Leave the middle empty, because lettuce will cover it later.

💡 **Tip:** Keep both U lines the same distance apart all the way around, about the width of a pencil tip.

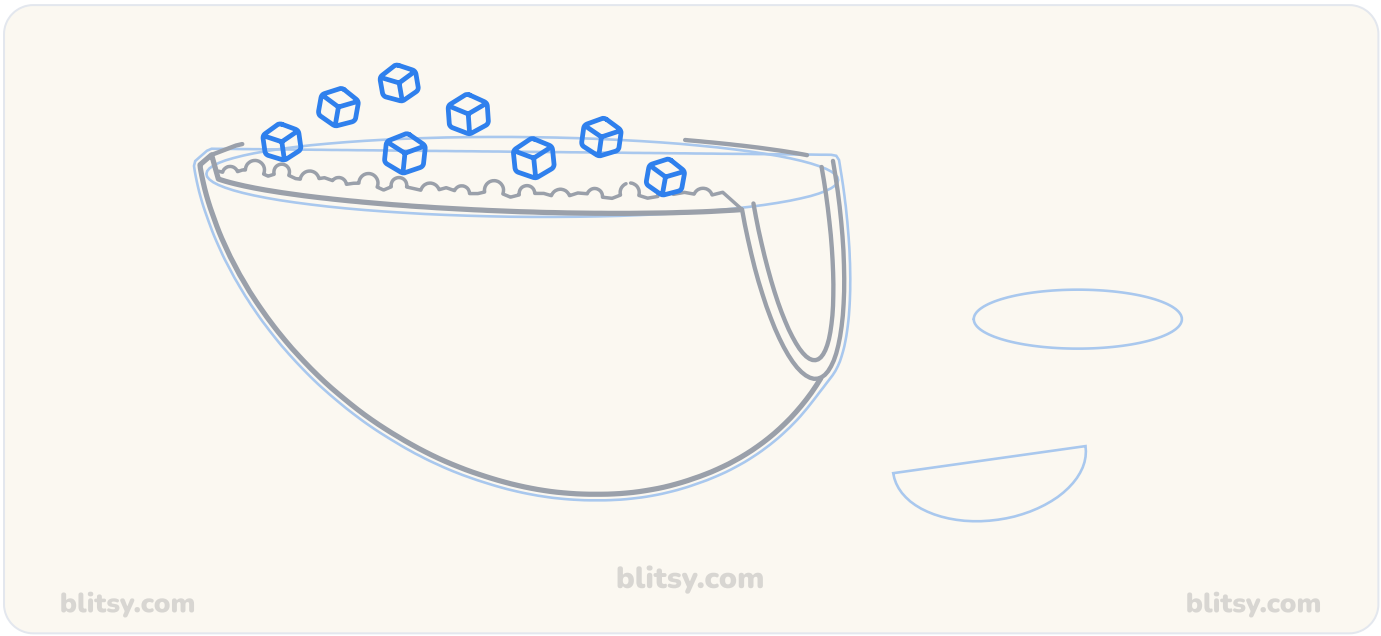
STEP 4 Add the bumpy brown filling



Just above the front edge, draw a row of small, tight bumps from the left tip almost to the open end. This is the seasoned filling peeking out under everything else. I often see bumps drawn too big, and then the filling turns into a cloud. Small, uneven crumbs look like real seasoned meat.

💡 **Tip:** Vary the bump sizes a little. A perfectly even row looks like a lace border.

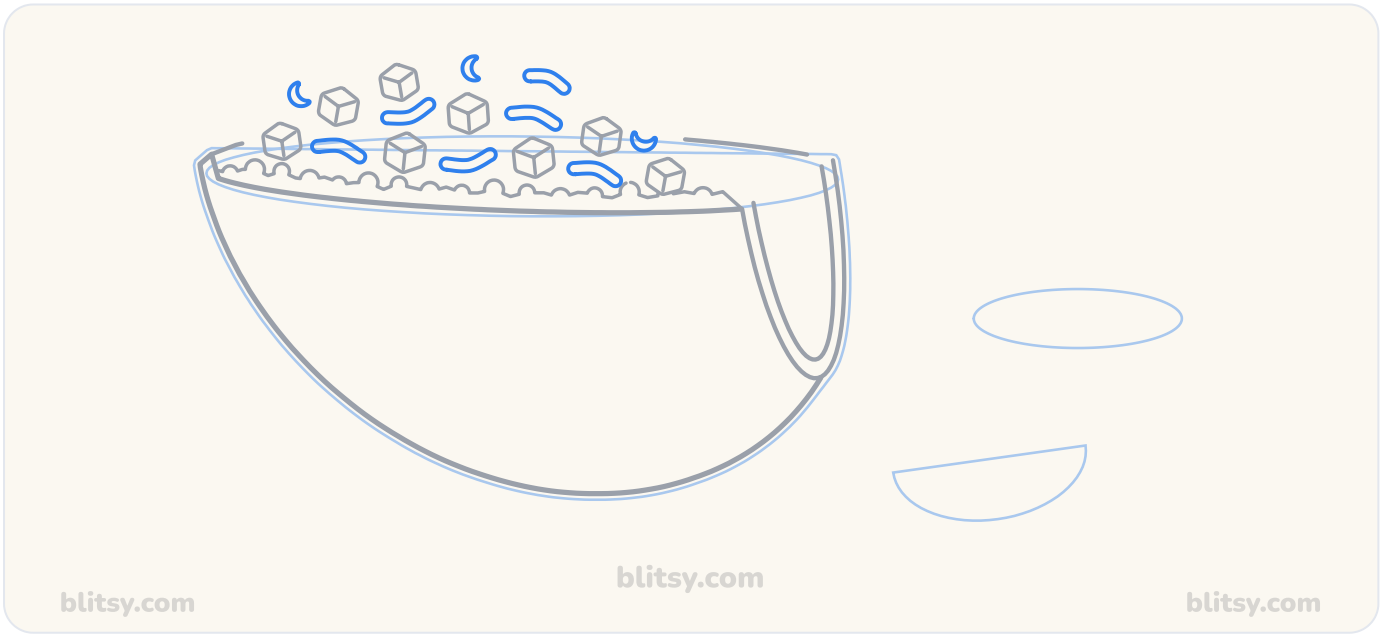
STEP 5 Place the tomato cubes



Above the filling, draw seven or eight little cubes scattered in two loose rows, with one more cube near the top. Each cube is a rounded six-sided shape with a Y inside it, which splits it into a top face and two side faces. They will look like they're floating for now. That's on purpose: drawing the front toppings first means the lettuce can wrap around them without any erasing.

💡 **Tip:** Tilt a few cubes left and a few right so they don't look stamped on.

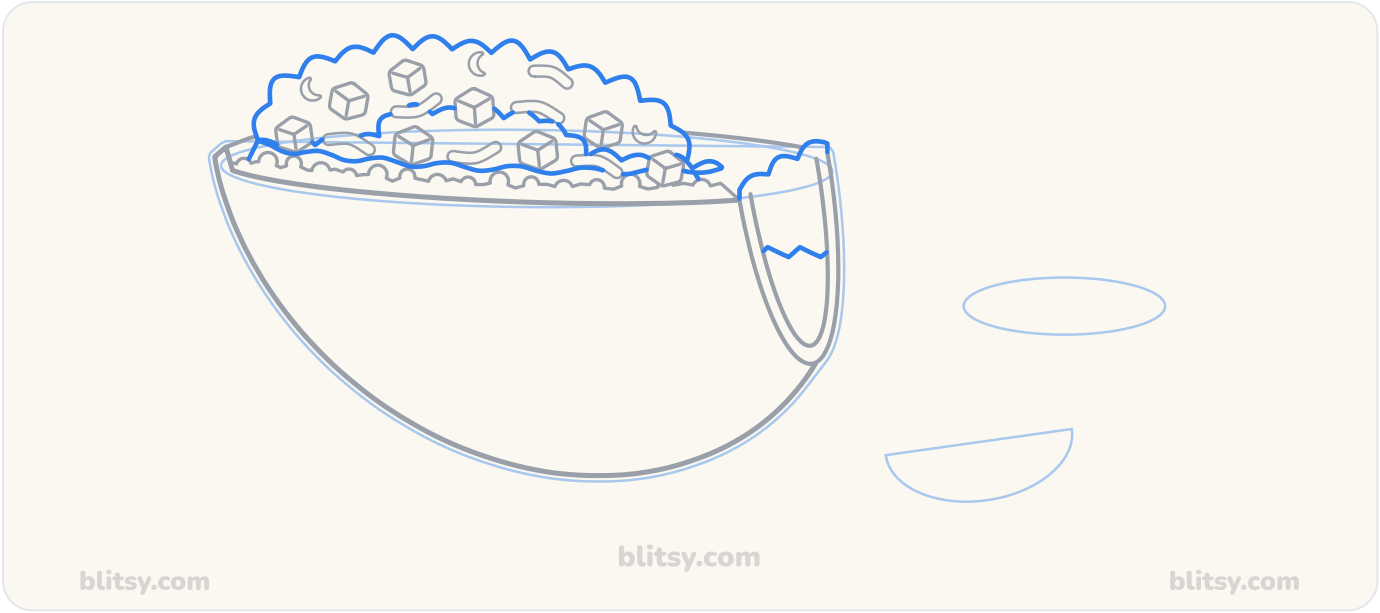
STEP 6 Sprinkle cheese strands and onion bits



In the gaps between the tomatoes, draw short curved strips for shredded cheese, each about as long as two cubes are wide. Give every strip rounded ends and a gentle bend. Then add a couple of tiny crescent shapes for chopped onion. I leave a little space around every piece so the lettuce shows through.

💡 **Tip:** Point the cheese strips in different directions. Parallel strips look like a fence.

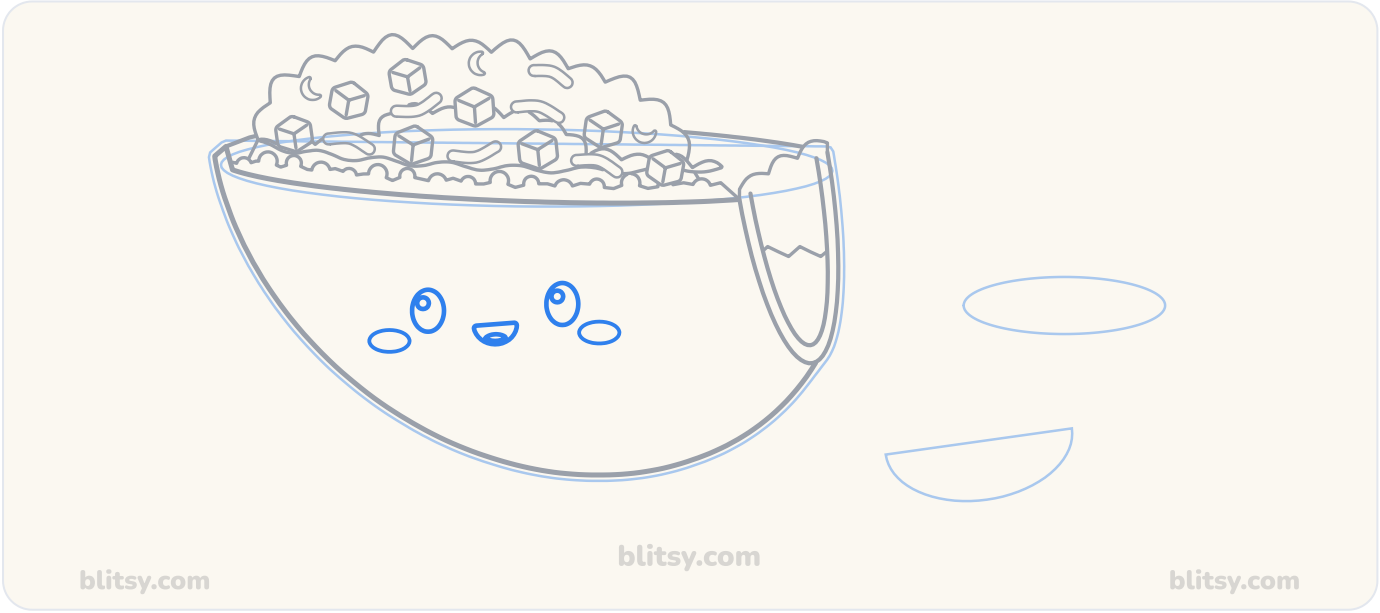
STEP 7 Wrap the lettuce around everything



Draw a low, wavy band of lettuce that starts just above the brown filling and weaves between the toppings. Behind it, draw a taller mound of ruffles that rises above the back rim in the middle. Each ruffle is a soft bump, so think of a row of scallops rather than zigzags. Add a few ruffles inside the open end, with a wavy line under them.

💡 **Tip:** Stop each lettuce line where it meets a tomato or cheese strip, then pick it up again on the other side.

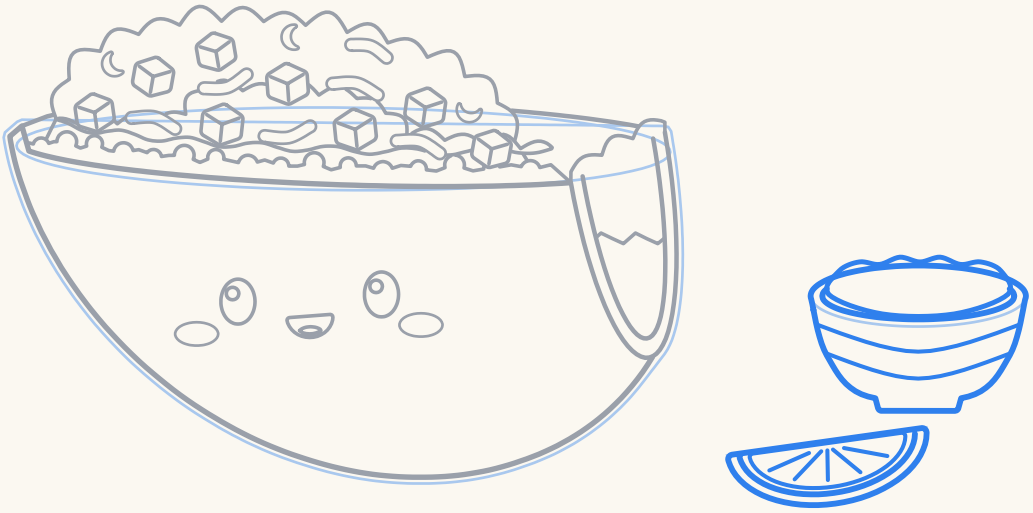
STEP 8 Give the taco a happy face



On the shell, a little below the middle, draw two tall oval eyes with a small circle in each for the sparkle. Between them and slightly lower, add a tiny open smile with a tongue. Then place a flat oval cheek under each eye, toward the outside. I keep the eyes fairly close together, since wide eyes on a long shape make the face look surprised.

💡 **Tip:** Put both sparkles on the same side of the eyes so the light seems to come from one place.

STEP 9 Draw the lime wedge and salsa bowl



Over the half circle guide, draw the lime wedge with a rounded rind, a thin pale line inside it, and the juicy part with five short lines fanning out like spokes. Above it, turn the small oval into a bowl: a rim, a rounded body, a flat foot and two curved stripes. Fill the top with a lumpy line for the salsa.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a clear gap between the taco and the bowl so the three objects don't merge.

STEP 10 Ink the keeper lines and erase guides



Go over every line you want to keep with the black pen: shell, open end, filling, toppings, lettuce, face, lime and bowl. Give the ink a minute to dry. Then erase the half moon, the oval and the other light helpers. Take your time on the long shell curve.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the small toppings with lighter pressure than the shell outline, which keeps the big shape strong.

STEP 11 Color your taco



Color the shell golden yellow and run orange along the top edge and the open end to show where it toasted. The inside of the back rim gets a slightly darker orange. Use a bright green for the tall lettuce and a lighter green for the front ruffles. Then make the filling brown, the tomatoes red with one darker side, the cheese yellow orange, the bowl blue and the lime green. Finish with pink cheeks and a few brown speckles on the shell.

💡 **Tip:** Color the big light areas first and the small dark details last, so nothing gets smeared.