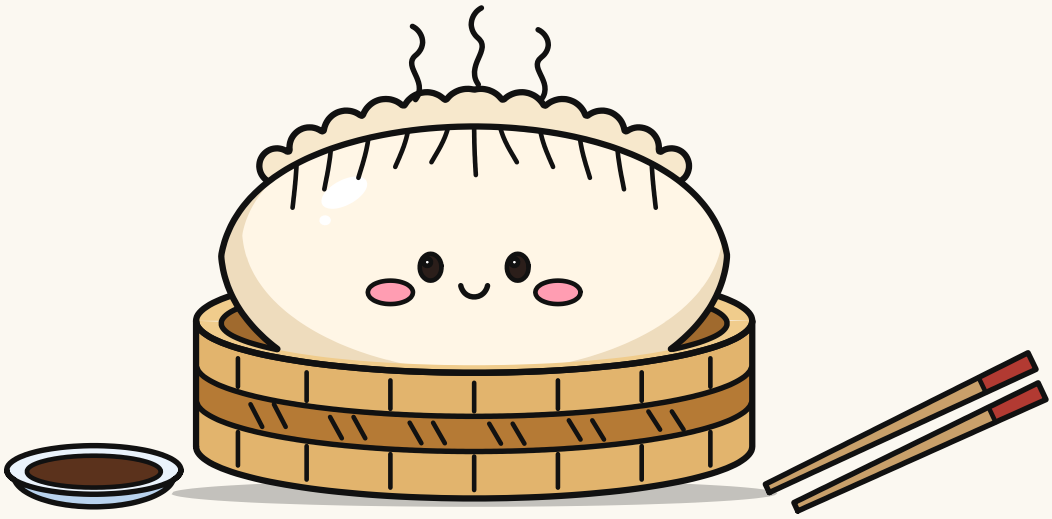
How to Draw a Dumpling

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

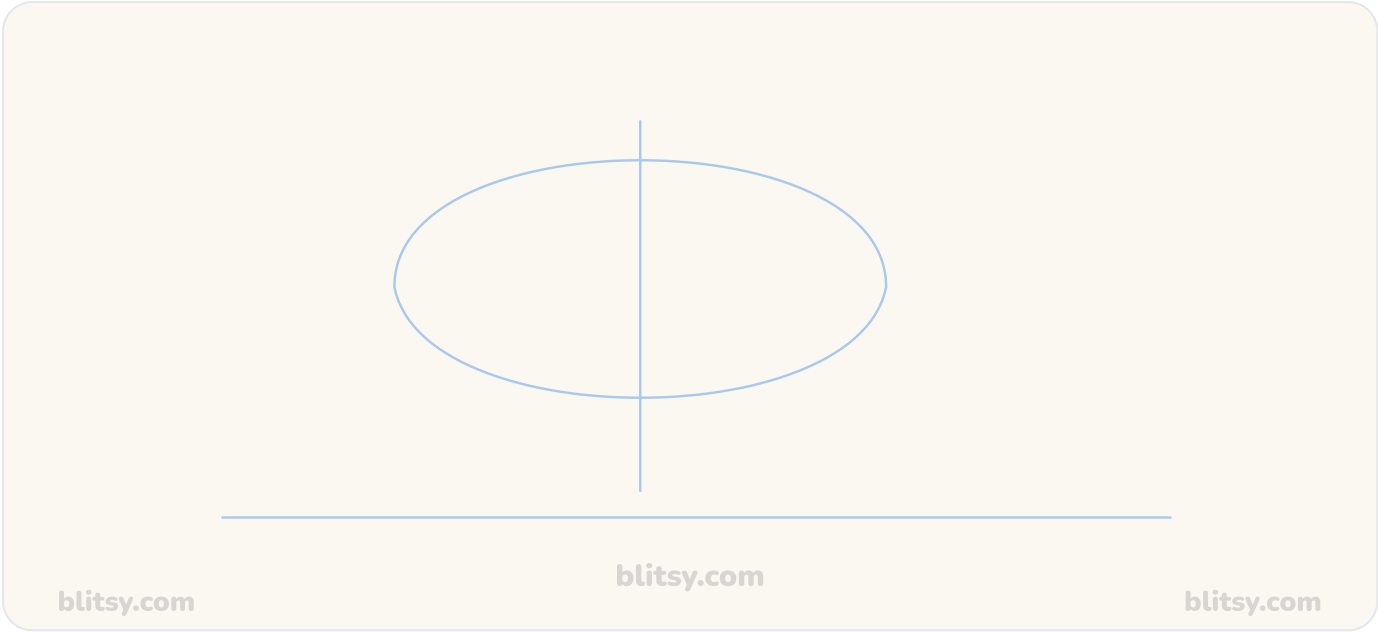
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

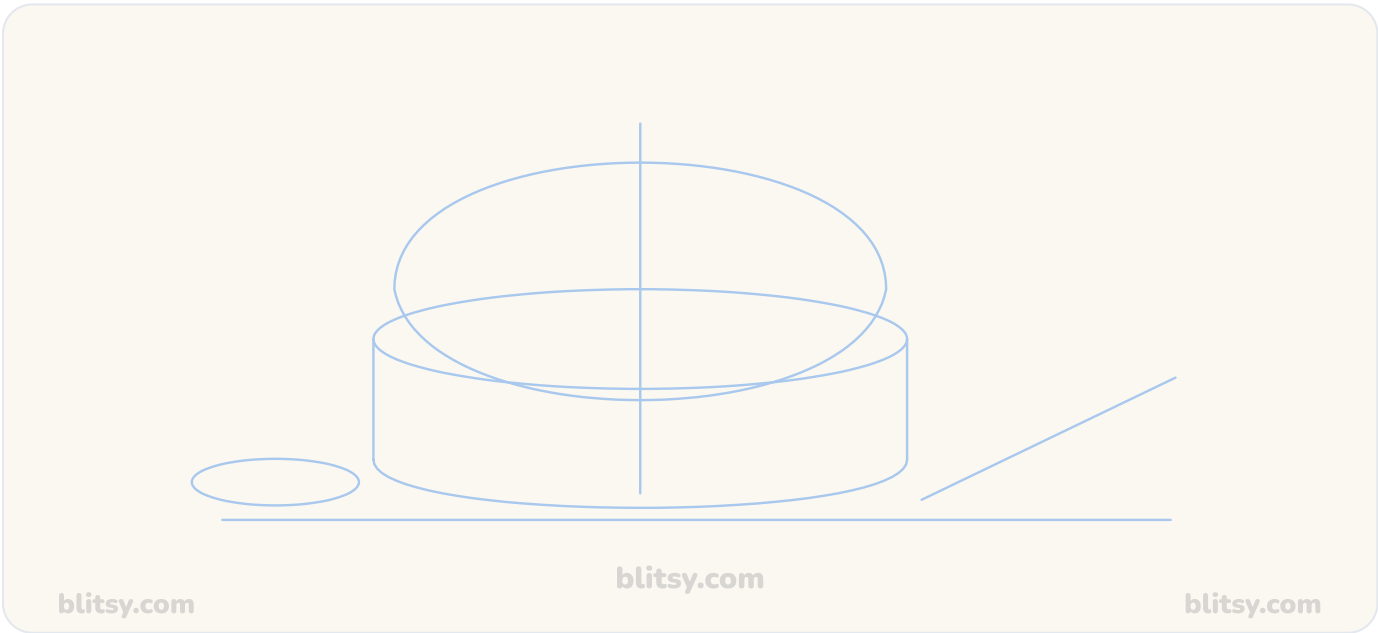
STEP 1 Sketch a wide oval and a center line



Draw a light vertical line a little left of the middle of your page. Around it, sketch a wide oval roughly twice as wide as it is tall, and add a long flat table line underneath. I keep this oval big, because a small one leaves no room for the face later.

💡 **Tip:** Hold the pencil far back from the tip. Your lines come out softer and easier to erase.

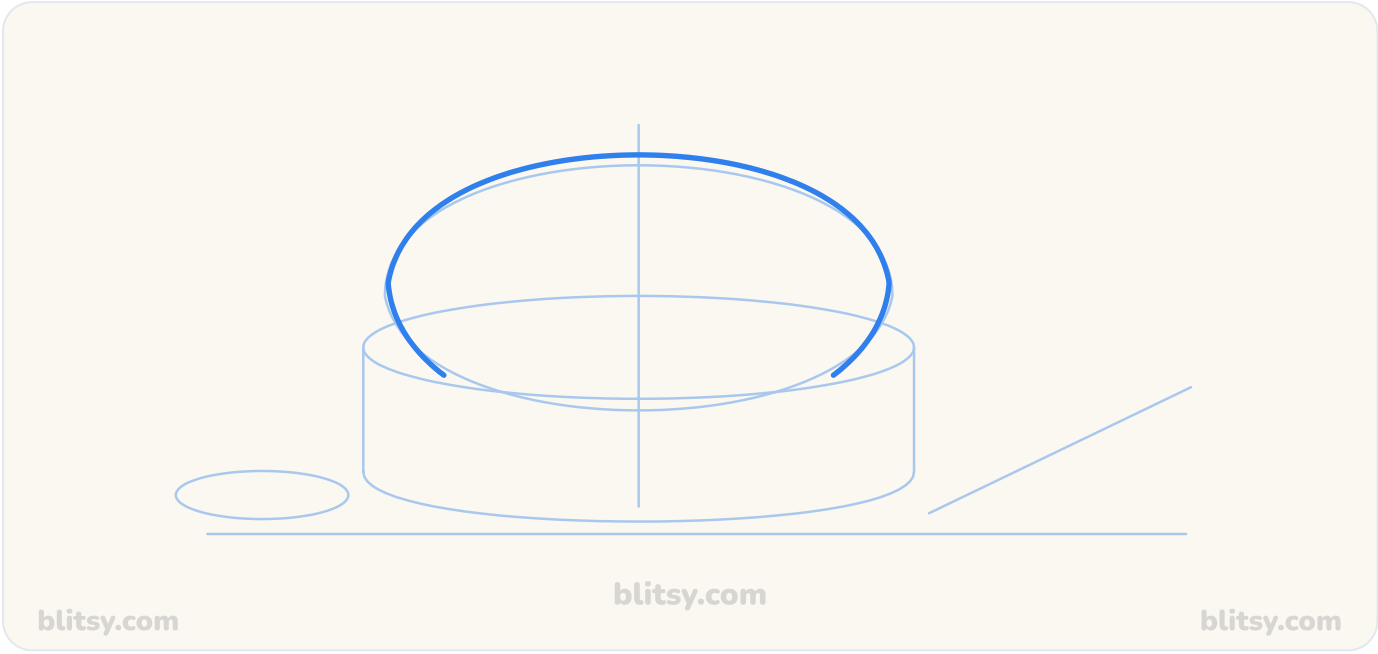
STEP 2 Add guides for the steamer and extras



Draw a second wide oval that cuts across the lower part of the first one. That's the top of the steamer. Drop two short straight lines from its ends and join them with a curve at the bottom, so you get a short, round box. On the left, sketch a small flat oval for the sauce dish, and on the right a slanted line for the chopsticks.

💡 **Tip:** Make the steamer oval wider than the dumpling oval, so the dumpling looks like it's sitting inside.

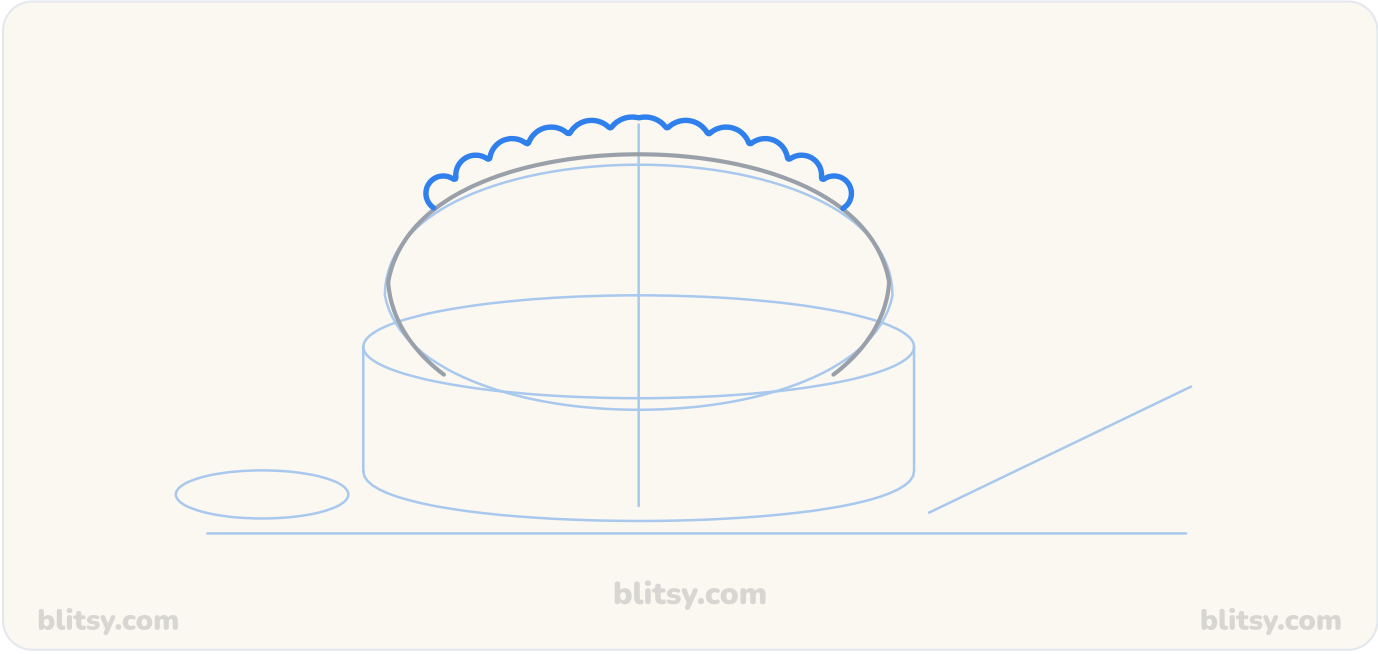
STEP 3 Draw the plump dumpling body



Now trace the dumpling's outline over the first oval. Start at the left tip, curve up over the top and down to the right tip, letting both tips point slightly upward like a smile. Stop where the lines reach the steamer, because the bottom of the dumpling hides inside it. Those upturned tips are what make it read as a dumpling and not a bread roll.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the top curve smooth and round. A flat top makes the dumpling look deflated.

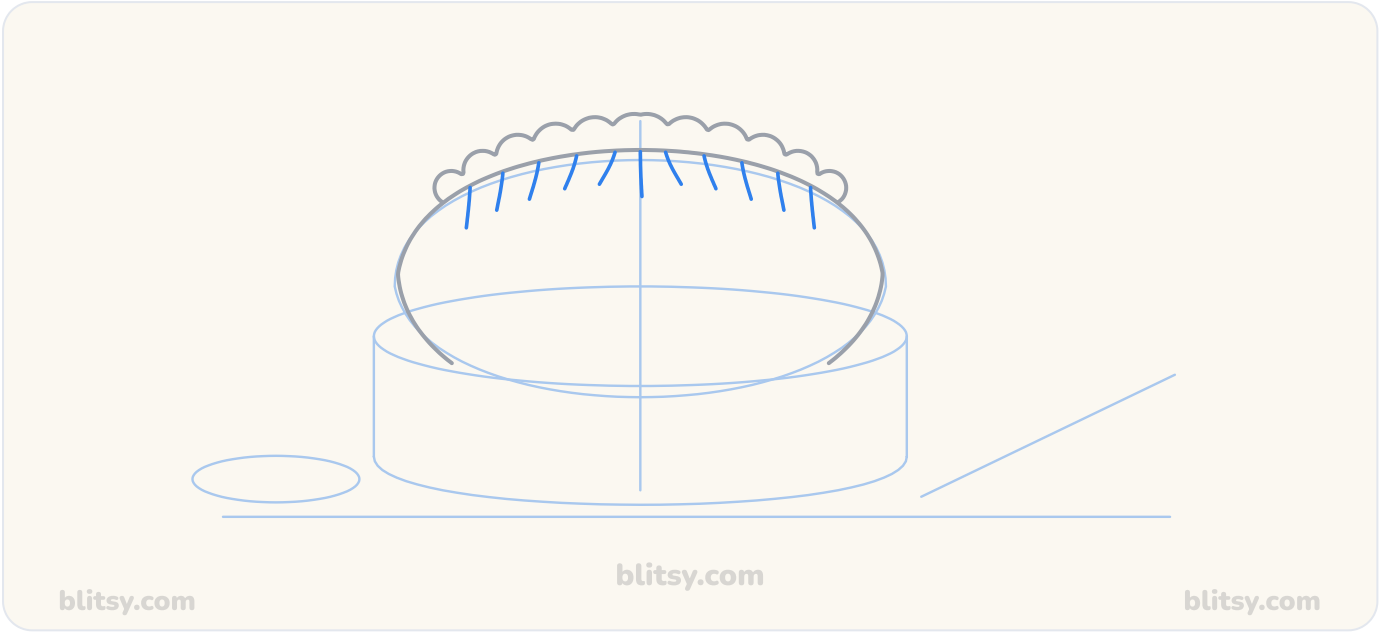
STEP 4 Add the pleats along the top



Draw a row of small rounded bumps that sit on the top curve, like a little ruffled crest. Make the bumps biggest in the middle and smaller toward the tips. This is the folded seam where the dough was pinched shut. When I teach this, I tell kids to think of a row of tiny clouds holding hands.

💡 **Tip:** Start in the middle with one bump, then work outward on each side so the row stays even.

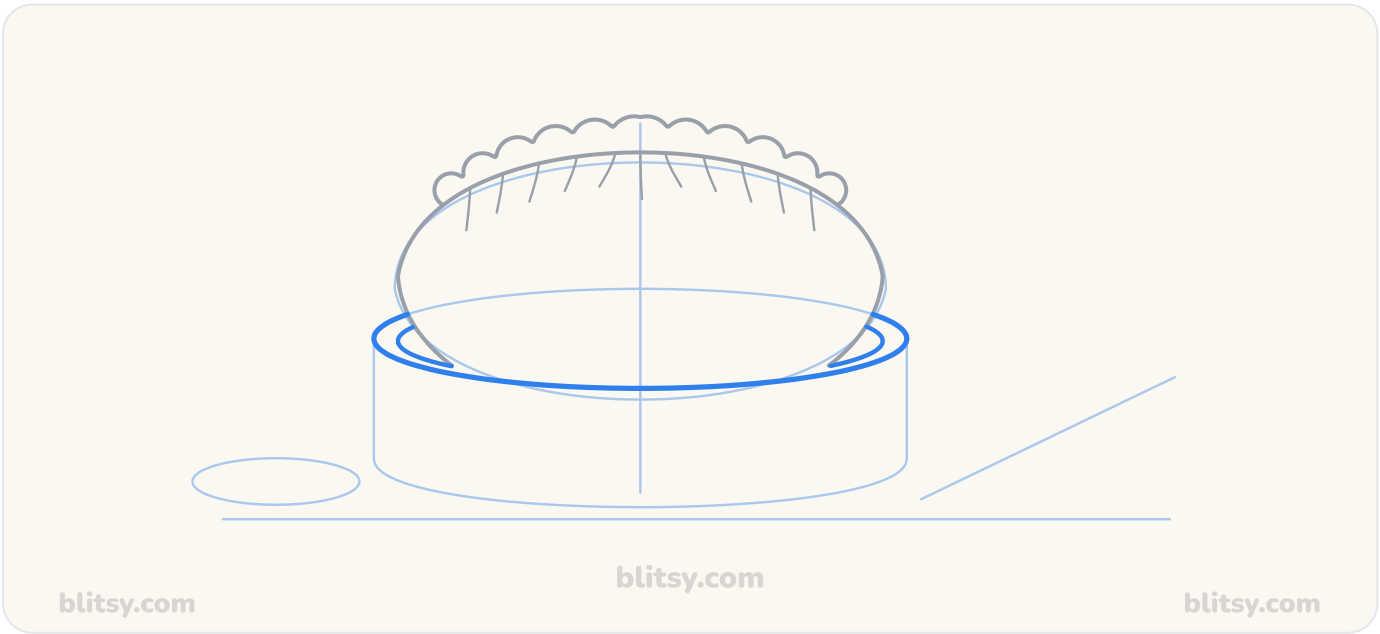
STEP 5 Draw little folds under the pleats



From each dip between two bumps, pull a short curved line down onto the body. The middle folds can hang straight, while the outer ones lean gently toward the tips. Short lines work best. If you stretch them halfway down the dumpling, they collide with the face and the whole thing starts to look striped.

💡 **Tip:** Lift your pencil at the end of each fold so the lines taper instead of ending in a dot.

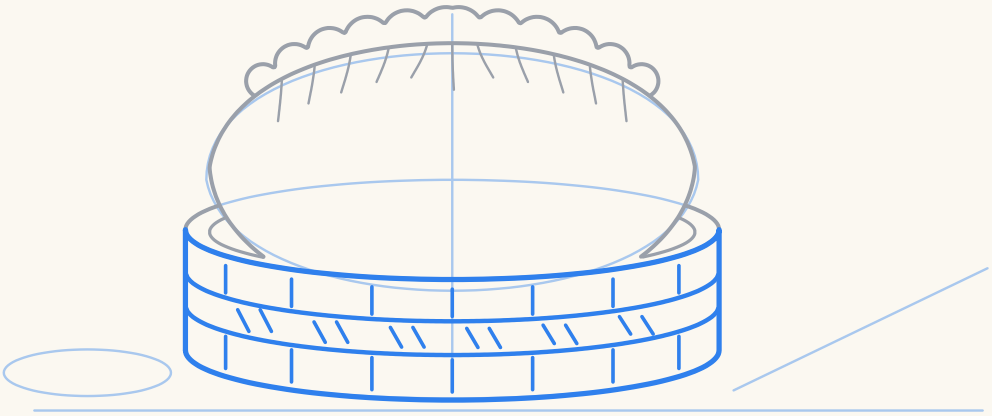
STEP 6 Outline the round steamer rim



Go over the steamer oval, but only on the parts you can see. The back of the rim disappears behind the dumpling, and the front passes in front of its bottom. Then draw a slightly smaller oval inside the first to show how thick the bamboo rim is. Most beginners draw the rim straight across the dumpling, so stop and check where the dumpling should cover it.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the gap between the two rim ovals about the same all the way around.

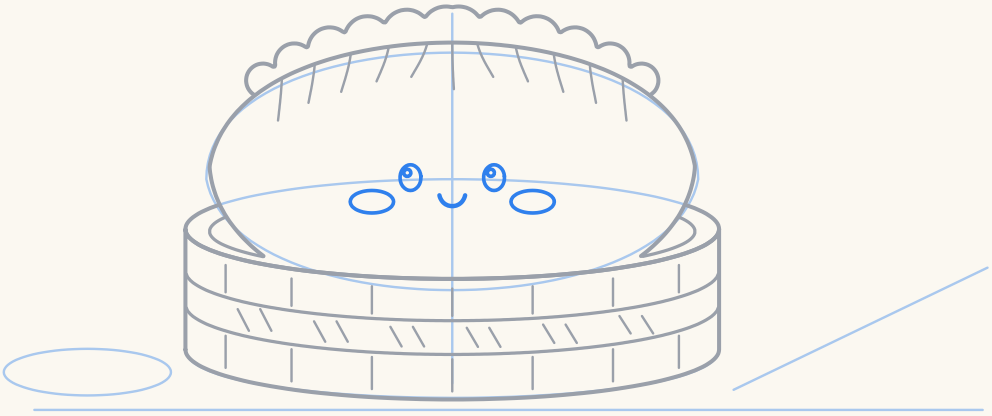
STEP 7 Draw the bamboo side and band



Trace the sides and curved bottom of the steamer. Across the middle of the side, draw two curved lines that follow the shape of the bottom: that's the woven band. Fill it with pairs of short slanted stitches. Above and below the band, add a few short upright lines for the bamboo strips.

💡 **Tip:** Space the upright strips a little closer near the edges. It helps the side look like it bends away from you.

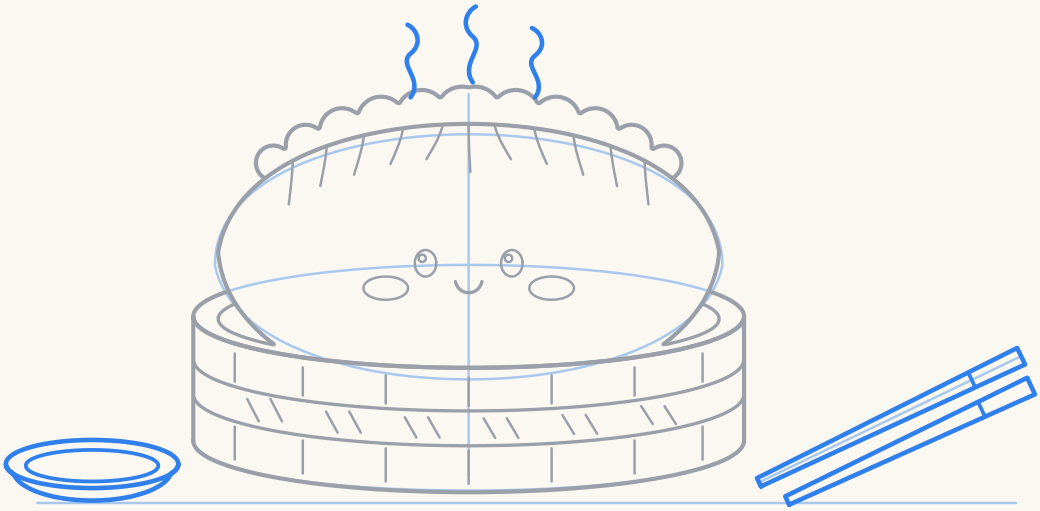
STEP 8 Give it a happy kawaii face



Place the face low on the body, a bit below the middle. Draw two small upright ovals for eyes with a tiny circle in each for the shine, then a little U smile between them. Add a flat oval cheek just outside and below each eye. Low, close-set features are the secret to kawaii food. Put them too high and the dumpling looks surprised.

💡 **Tip:** Keep both shine circles on the same side of the eyes, as if one lamp lights them.

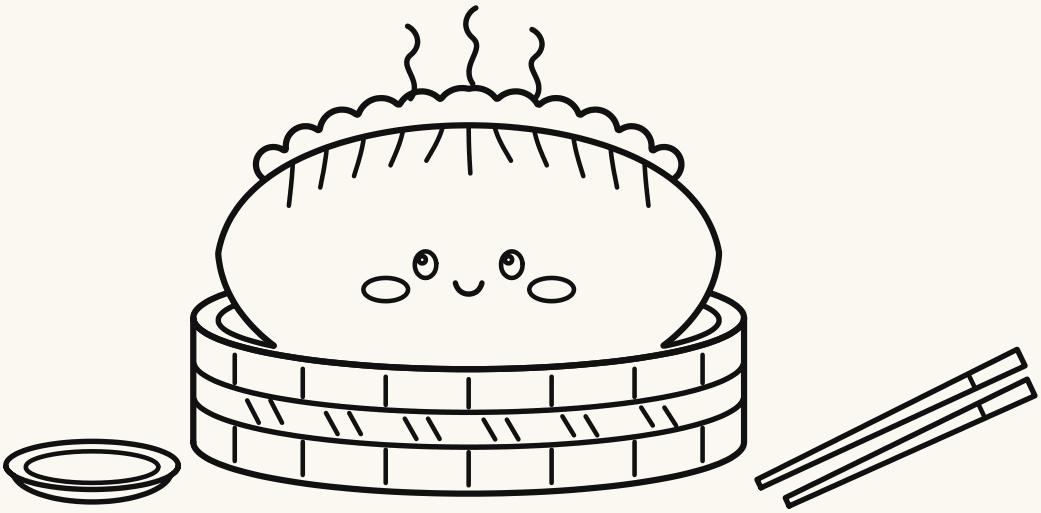
STEP 9 Add chopsticks, a dish and steam



Over the slanted guide, draw two long, thin chopsticks that get a little wider at the far end, with a short line across each one near the end for the colored tip. Turn the left oval into a shallow dish with a curved base and a smaller oval inside for the sauce. Finally, draw three wiggly steam lines rising from the pleats. Small kids can skip the dish if their page is getting crowded.

💡 **Tip:** Make the middle steam curl the tallest. Three equal curls look like a fence.

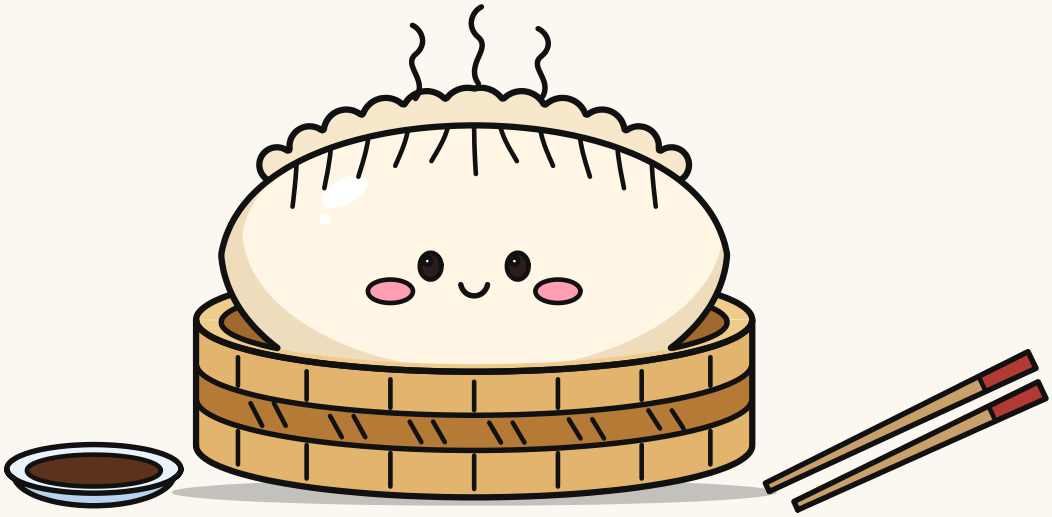
STEP 10 Ink your lines and erase the guides



Trace all the keeper lines with your black pen and give the ink a minute to dry. Then erase the ovals, the center line and the table line. I ink the big outline with a bit more pressure and the folds and stitches lighter, which keeps the dumpling as the star.

💡 **Tip:** Rotate the paper as you ink the curves so your hand always pulls the pen toward you.

STEP 11 Color your dumpling



Color the dough a soft cream and add tan along the bottom and the far edges to make it look puffy. Leave a small white shine on the upper left. The pleats get a slightly warmer cream. Make the steamer light brown with a darker brown band and inside, then the cheeks pink, the chopstick tips red, the dish light blue and the sauce dark brown.

💡 **Tip:** Press very lightly on the dough. Pale, gentle color is what makes it look soft and squishy.