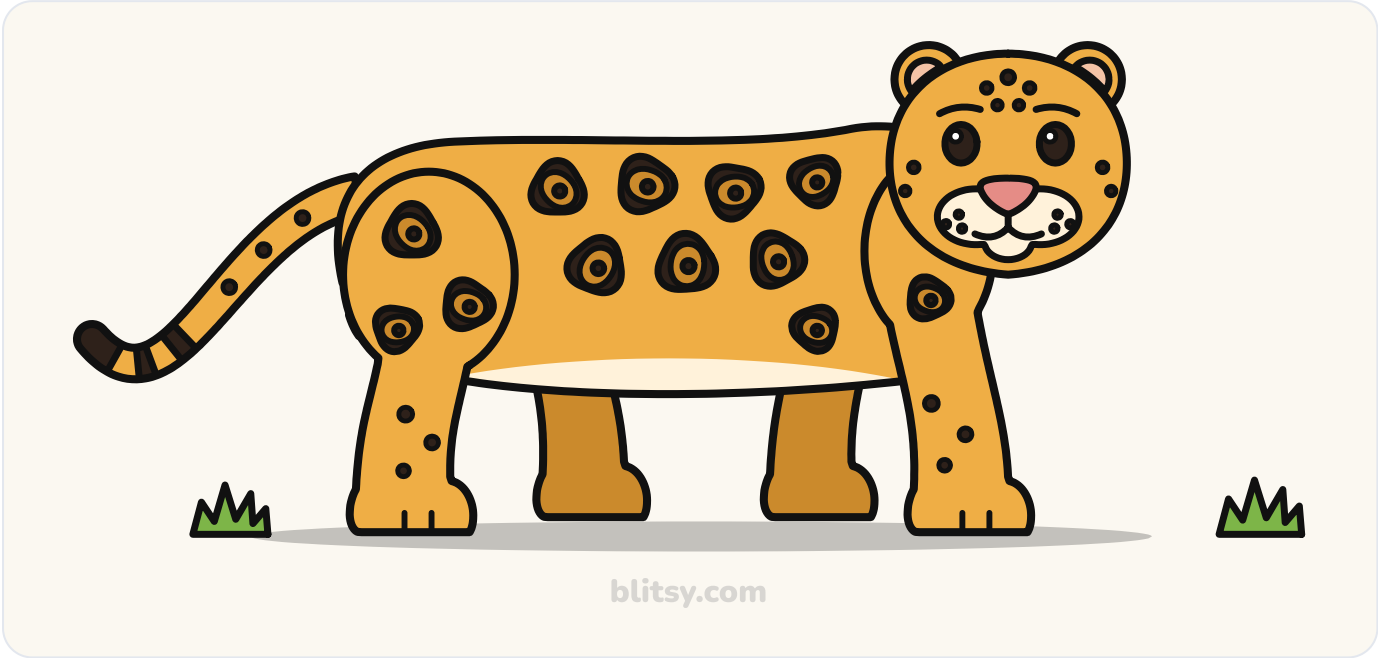
How to Draw a Jaguar

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

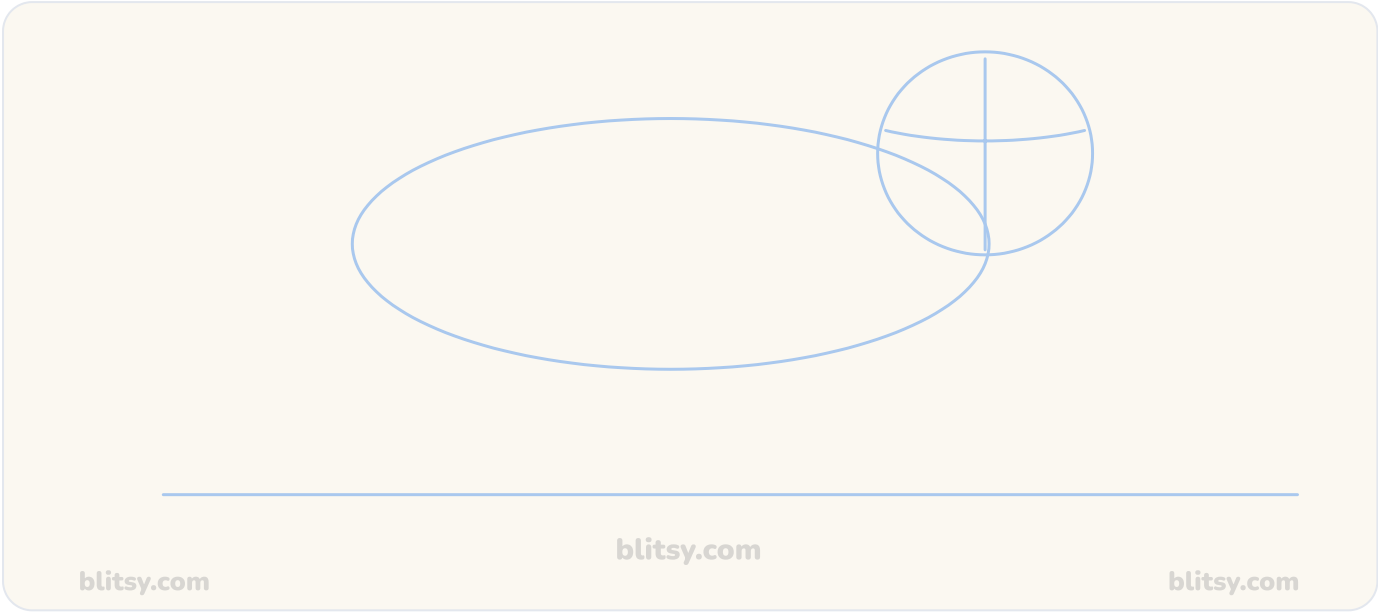
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper

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 →

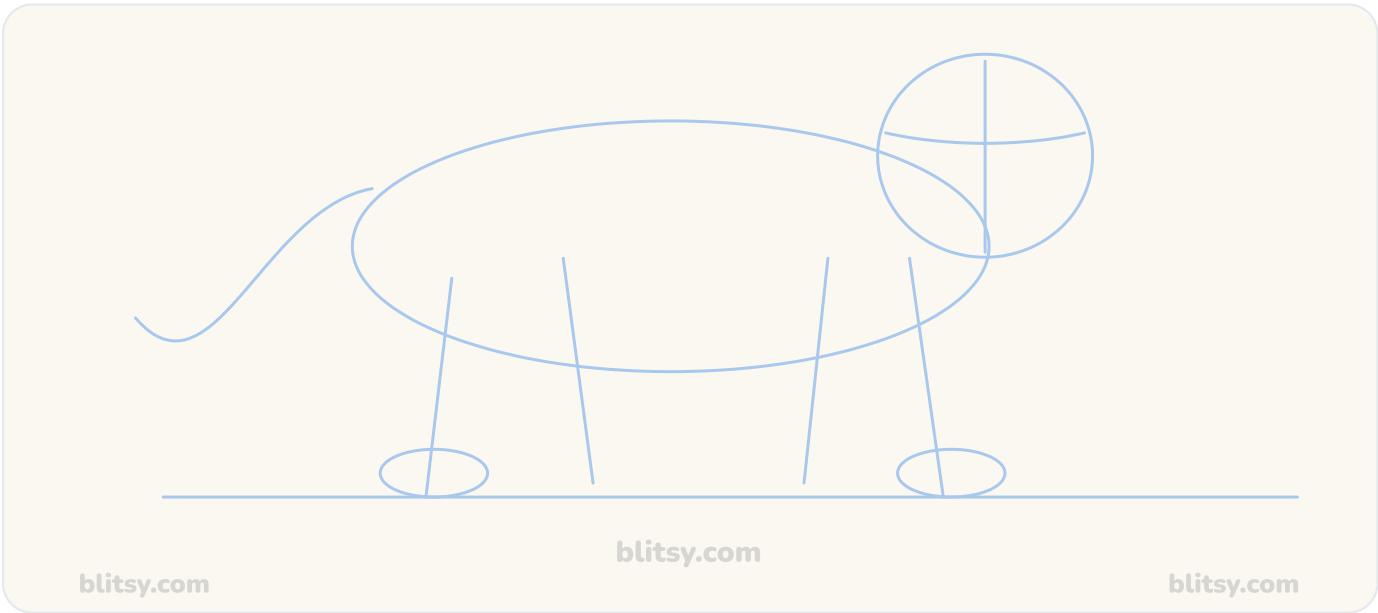
STEP 1 Draw the ground line, a long body oval and the head circle



Draw a light line low on the page for the ground. A little above it, sketch a long, flat oval for the body, about two and a half times wider than it is tall. Put a circle for the head at the right end, overlapping the top corner of the oval. Add a vertical line down the middle of the circle and a gently curved line across it, a bit above halfway, for the eyes.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the oval low and flat. A tall, round body turns a jaguar into a house cat.

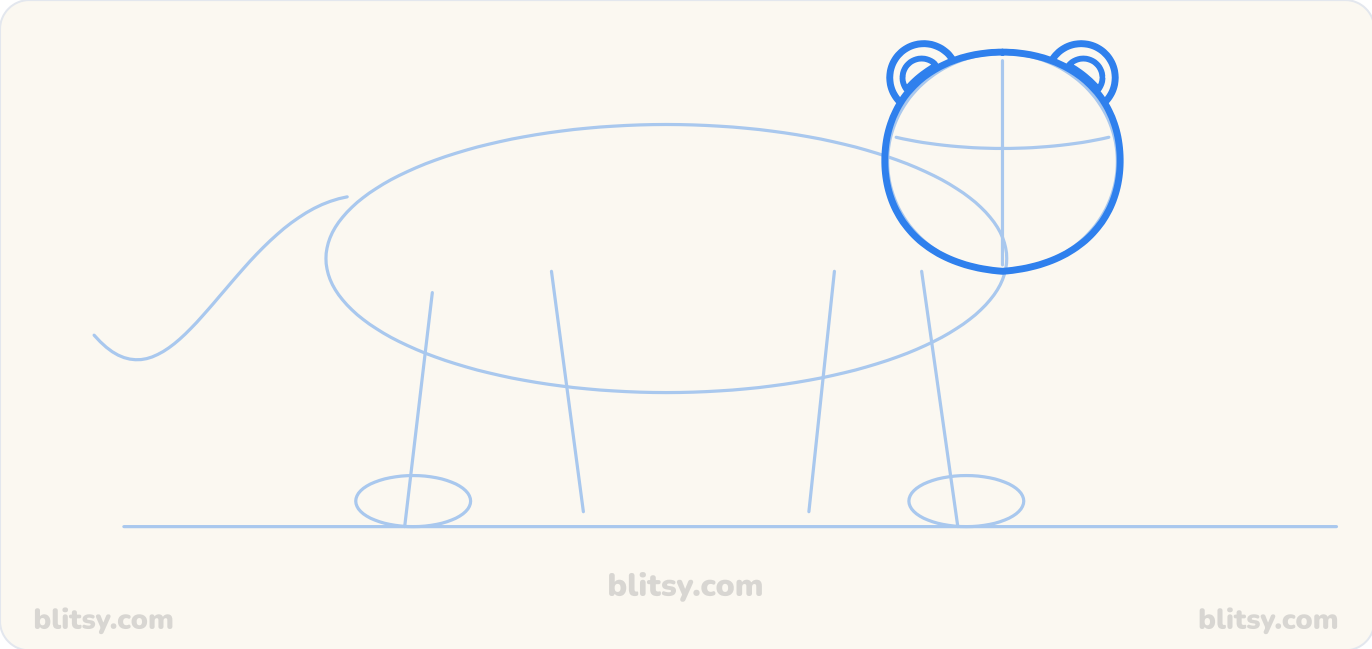
STEP 2 Add the leg lines, paw ovals and a tail curve



Draw four slanted lines from the oval down to the ground. The near back leg leans back and the near front leg leans forward, which makes the cat look like it's walking. Put a flat oval on the ground at the bottom of those two near legs for the paws. From the left end of the body, sweep a long curve down and then up at the end.

💡 **Tip:** The two inner leg lines should lean the opposite way to their outer partners. That cross pattern is what reads as a stride.

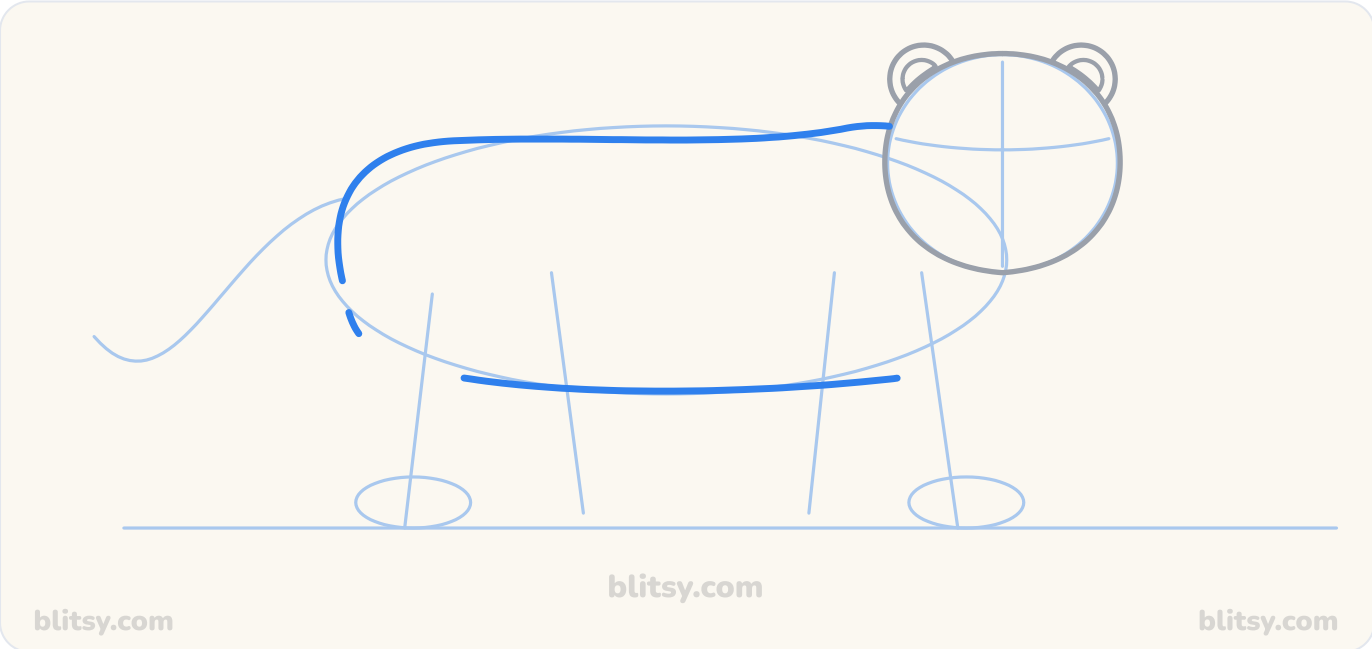
STEP 3 Outline the broad head and two round ears



Trace around the head circle with a firm line, letting the cheeks bulge out a little and the chin flatten. Jaguar heads are wide and heavy. Near the top, add two small round ears with a smaller circle inside each one. The bottom of each ear hides behind the head.

💡 **Tip:** Place the ears on the upper corners of the head, not on top. Ears sitting right on top look like a bear's.

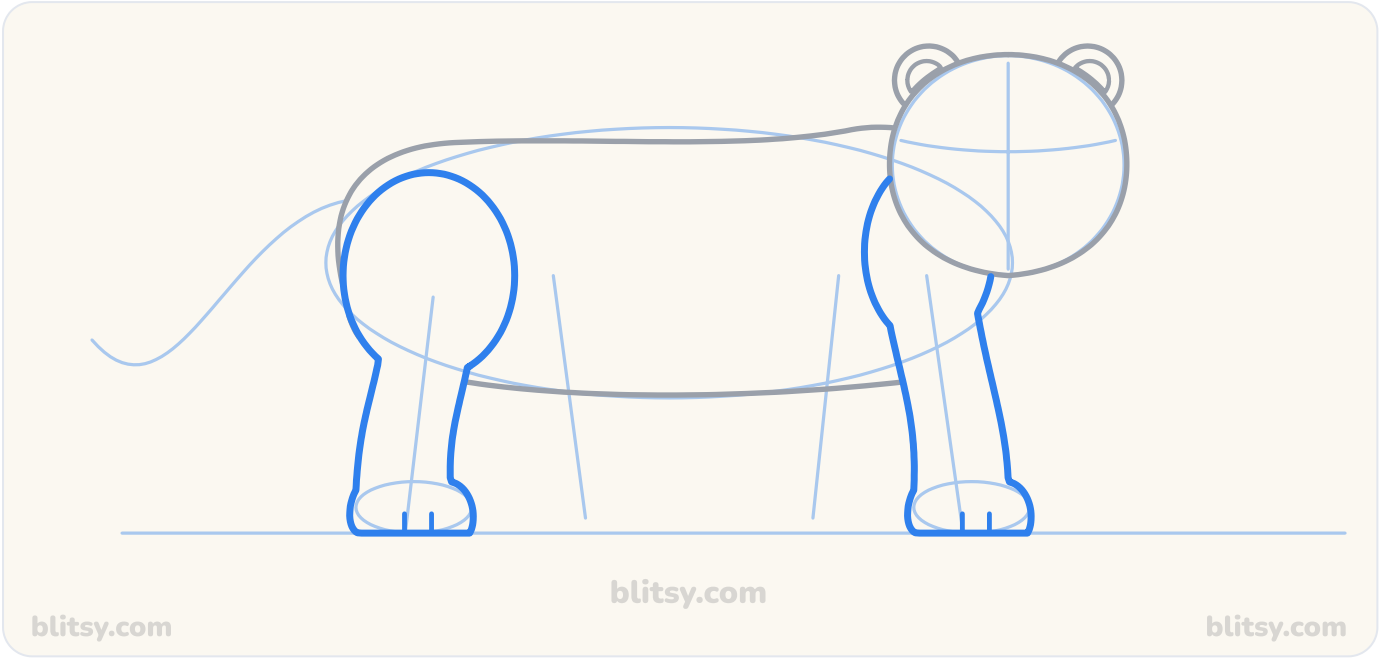
STEP 4 Draw the long, low body



Start at the back of the head and draw the back line almost flat all the way to the rump, then round it down the back end. Underneath, draw the belly line between where the legs will go. Skip the bottom of the rump; the thigh covers it next.

💡 **Tip:** Let the back dip just a hair in the middle. A perfectly straight ruler line looks stiff.

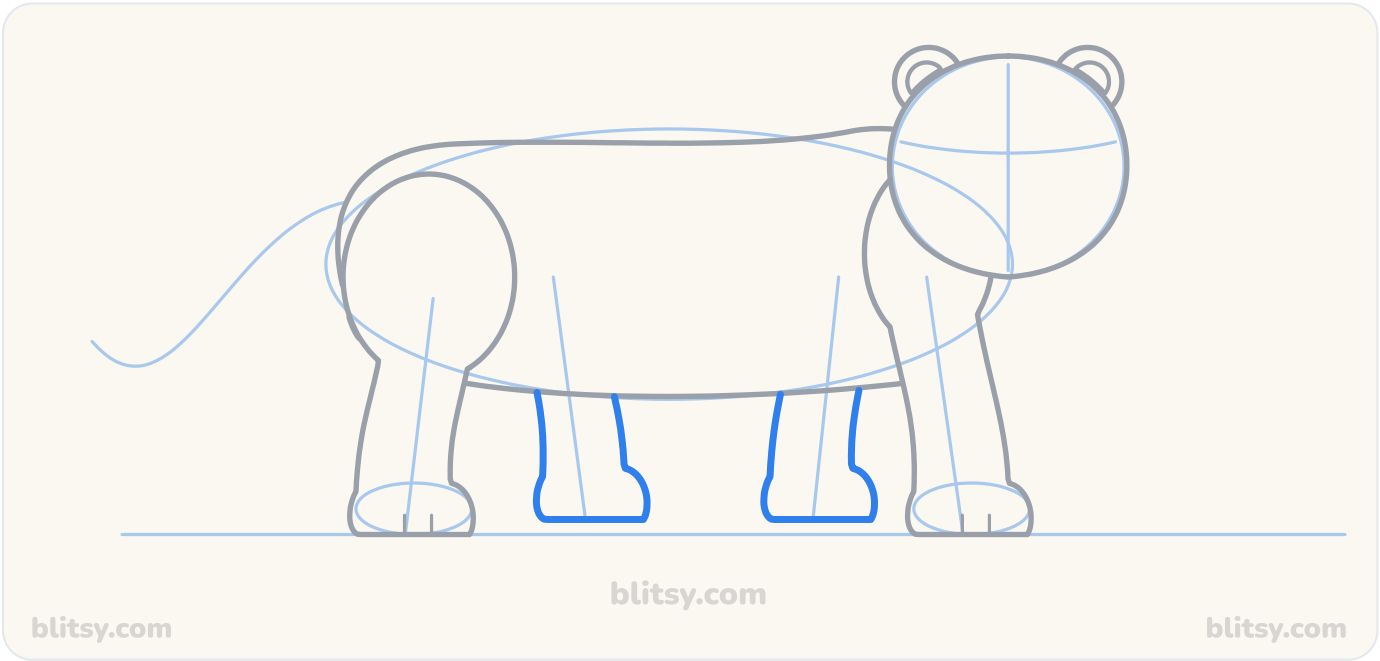
STEP 5 Add the near legs with a thigh, a shoulder and big paws



On the back leg, draw a big egg shape for the thigh that fills the rump, then bring the leg down from its bottom along your guide. On the front leg, a tall oval for the shoulder sits just under the head. End both legs in a wide rounded paw that's bigger than the leg itself, with two short toe lines.

💡 **Tip:** Jaguars have short, chunky legs. If your legs look long and thin, thicken them before moving on.

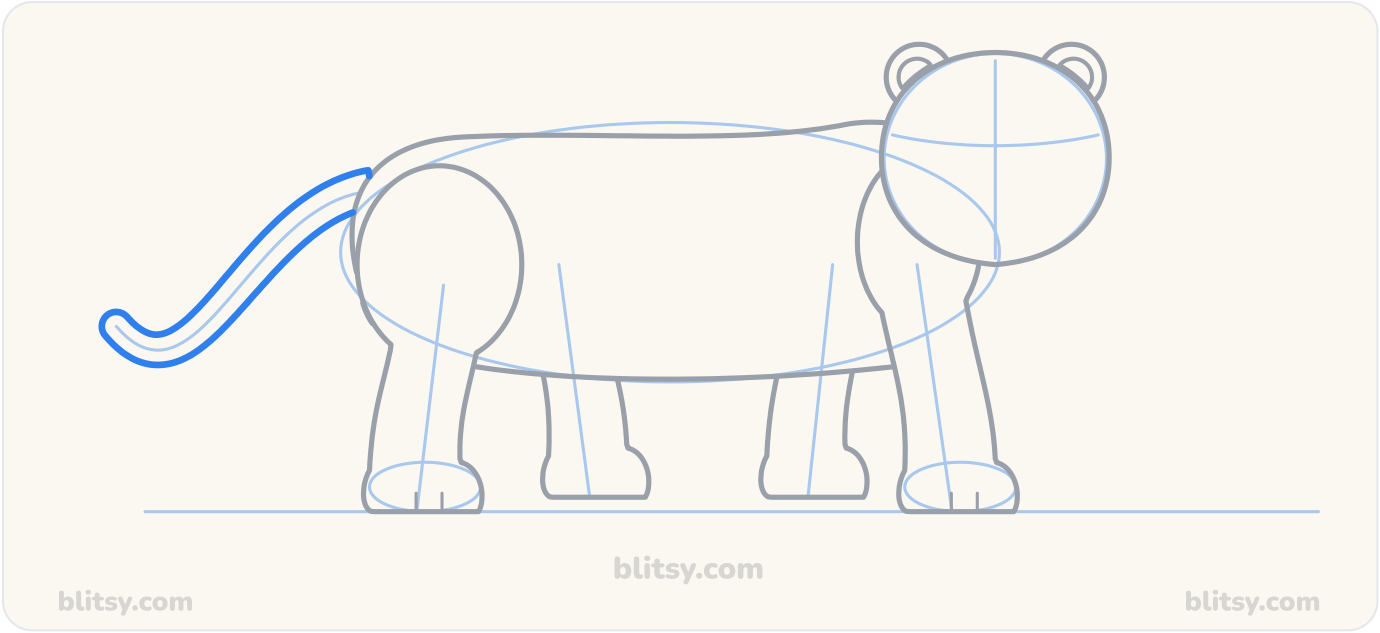
STEP 6 Draw the two far legs



The far legs peek out between the near ones. Each is a short column under the belly with a rounded paw, set a little higher because it's further away.

💡 **Tip:** Raising the far paws by just a few millimeters gives the drawing depth for free.

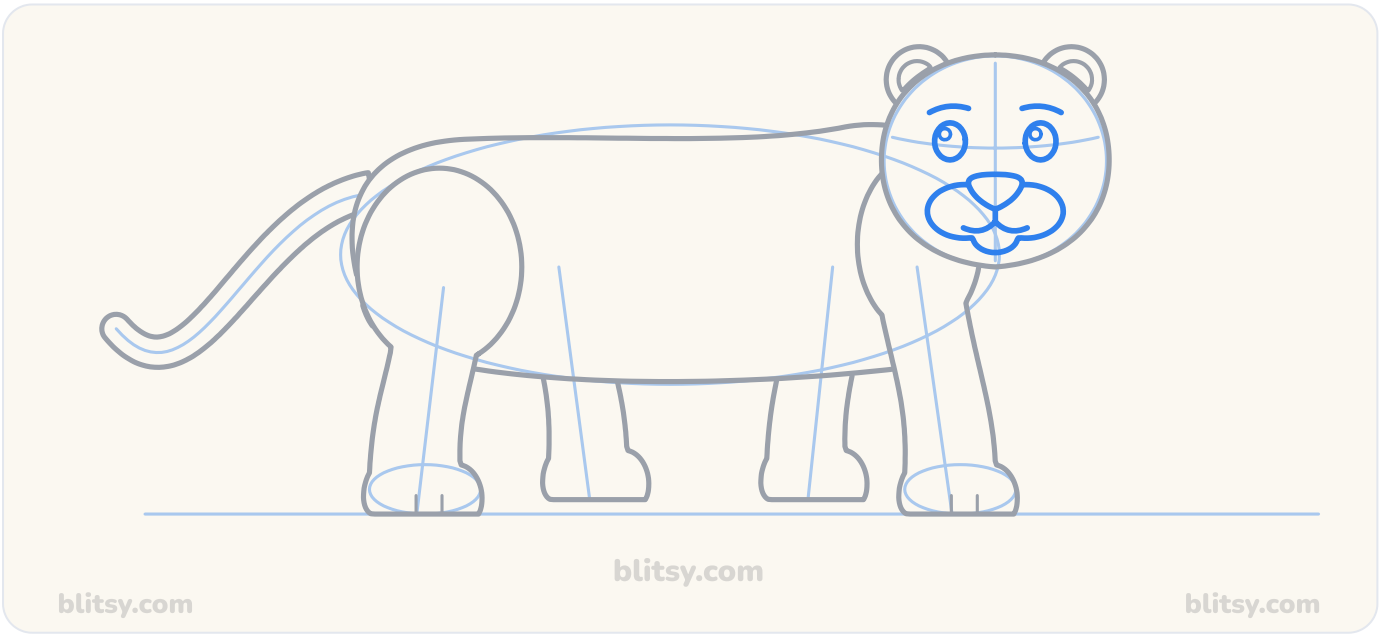
STEP 7 Draw a long tail that dips and lifts



Follow the tail guide with two lines about a finger width apart, starting from behind the thigh. Let them dip down toward the ground and curl back up at the end, then round off the tip. A jaguar's tail is shorter than a leopard's, so it doesn't need to reach the ground.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the top edge in one smooth pass, then the bottom edge. Two long strokes stay smoother than lots of short ones.

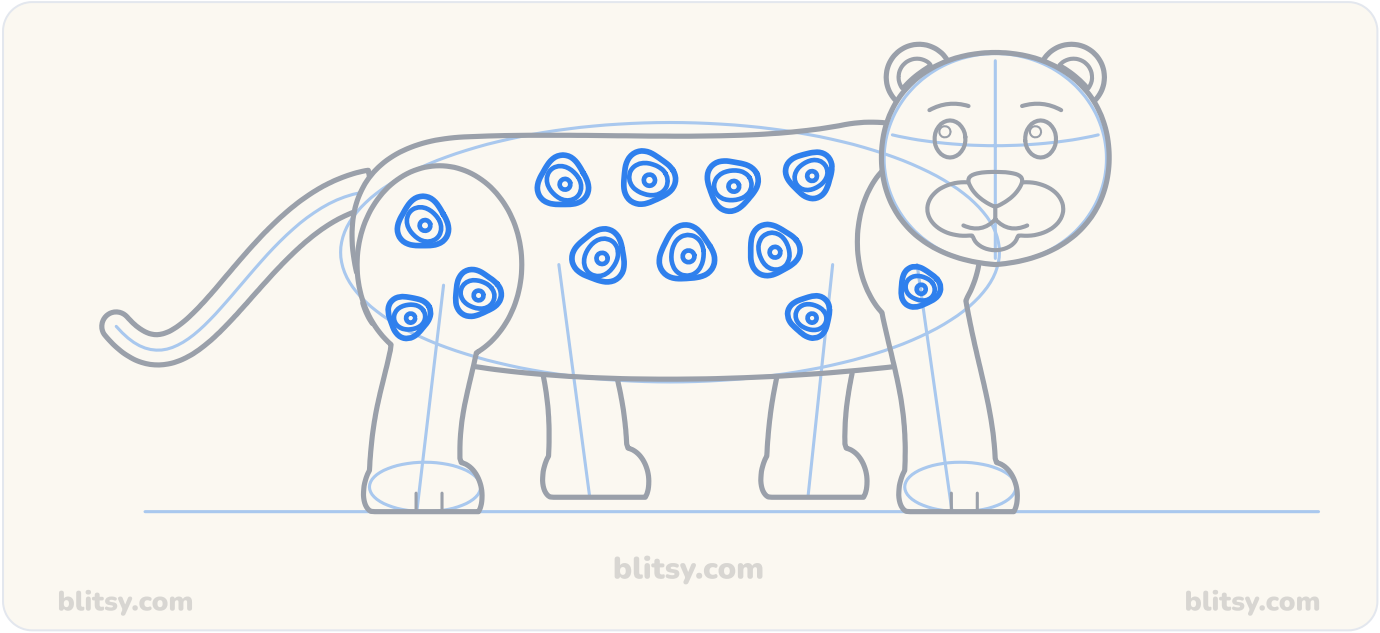
STEP 8 Add the muzzle, nose and a smile, then the eyes



Low in the face, draw two puffy cheek bumps side by side with a little chin bump under them. A rounded pink triangle for the nose sits where the bumps meet, and a short line drops from it into a gentle W smile. Place two oval eyes on the curved guide line with a small shine circle in each, then add two soft brows above.

💡 **Tip:** Put both shine circles in the same corner of the eyes, or the jaguar will look cross-eyed.

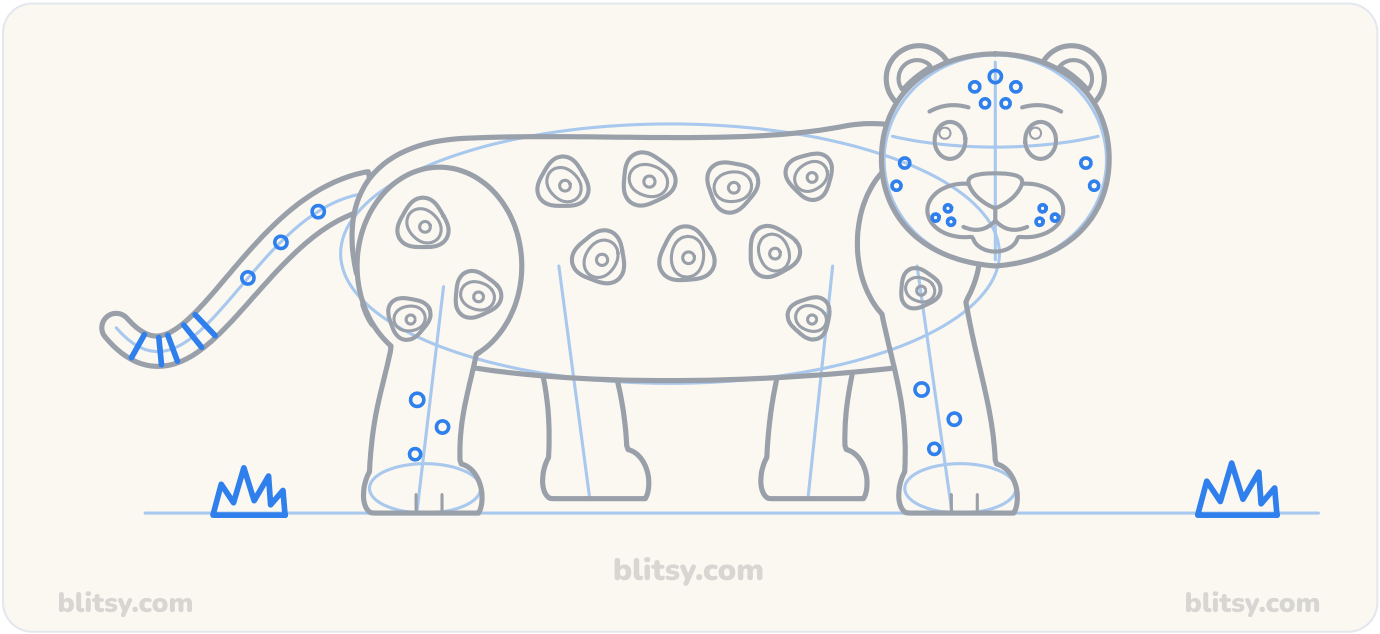
STEP 9 Draw ring rosettes with a dot in the middle



This is the step that makes it a jaguar. Draw a lumpy circle about the size of your thumbnail, then a smaller circle inside it, and put a dot in the very center. Repeat across the body in loose rows, plus a few on the thigh and shoulder. Leopards have open rosettes with no dot inside, so the center dot is your proof of jaguar.

💡 **Tip:** Make the circles a little wobbly and not all the same size. Perfect circles look like buttons, not fur.

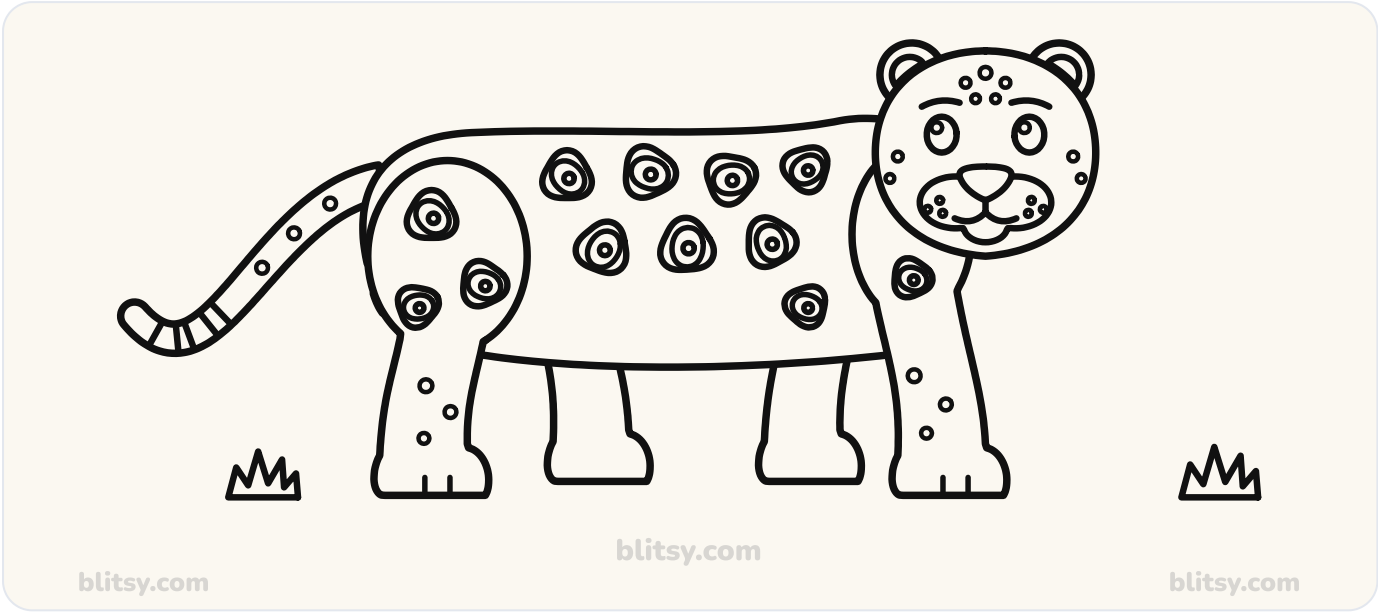
STEP 10 Add small spots, tail rings and grass



The head, lower legs and the start of the tail get small solid spots instead of rosettes. I put a little cluster on the forehead and a few on each cheek. Near the end of the tail, draw two bands across it and mark off the tip, which will be black. Finish with a tuft of grass on each side of the jaguar.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the spots away from the eyes and muzzle so the face stays clean and friendly.

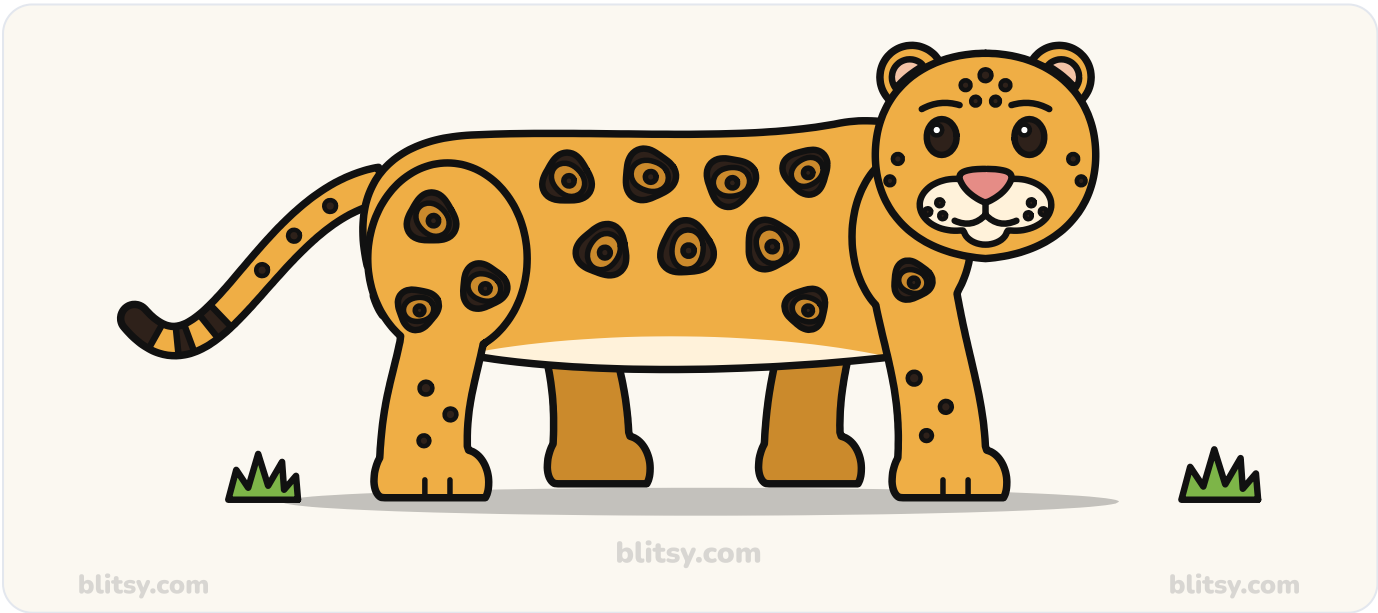
STEP 11 Ink the jaguar and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with the black marker. I start with the face while my hand is steady and leave the rosettes for last, because there are a lot of small circles. Skip the light guide shapes. When the ink is fully dry, erase all the pencil.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you ink the rosettes so your hand always curves the same comfortable way.

STEP 12 Color your jaguar



Golden yellow covers the head and body, plus the tail and near legs. Use dark orange for the two far legs and for the middle of every rosette, which makes the rings pop. Every ring and dot goes black, as do the spots, tail bands and eyes, but leave the shine white. Make the muzzle and belly cream, the nose pink and the grass green.

💡 **Tip:** Color the rosette centers before the black rings. Going over yellow with orange later gets muddy fast.