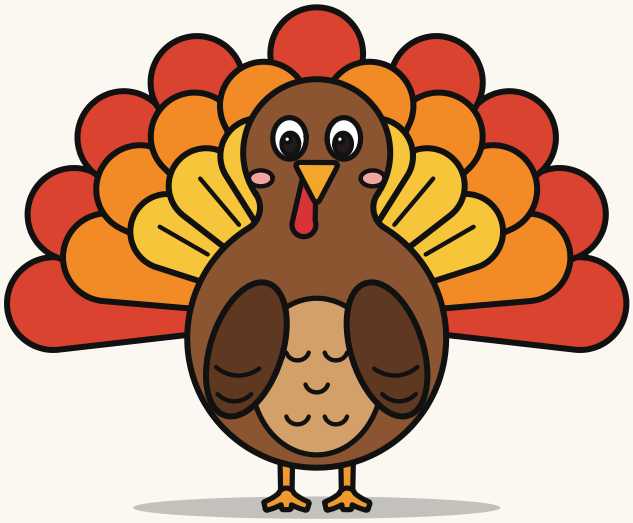
How to Draw a Turkey

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

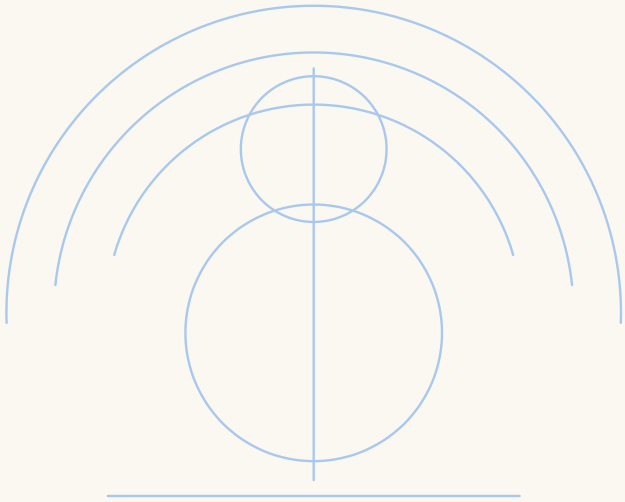
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

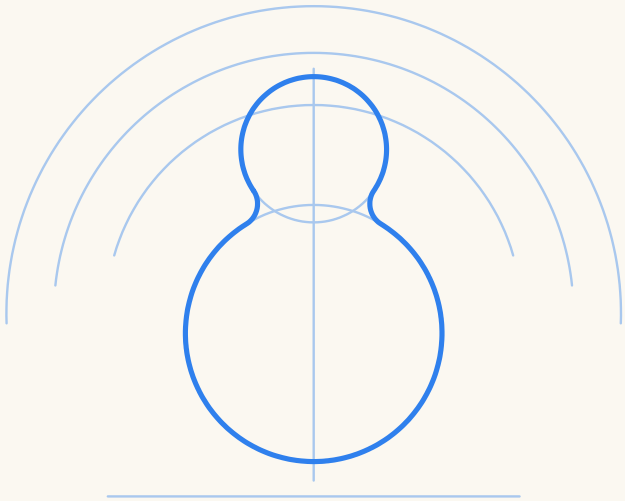
STEP 1 Sketch the body, head and fan guides



Draw a ground line near the bottom of the page. Sit a big circle on top of it, almost touching, and a smaller circle on top of that for the head, overlapping a little like a snowman. Add a line down the middle, then three curved arcs around them like a rainbow. Each arc marks where one row of feathers ends.

💡 **Tip:** Make the head circle a bit more than half as wide as the body. A tiny head turns the turkey into a bowling pin.

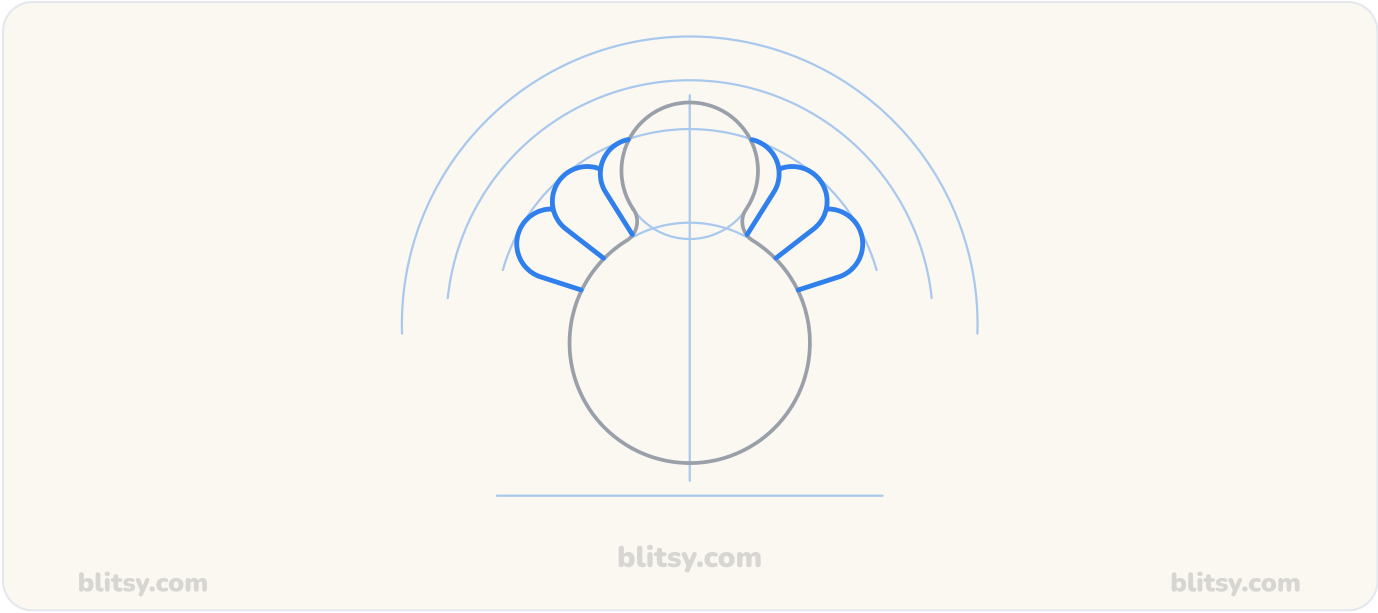
STEP 2 Join head and body into a pear shape



Trace around both circles in one firm line, but skip the pinch where they meet. Instead, let the line curve smoothly inward and out again, so the head flows into the body through a short, soft neck.

💡 **Tip:** If the neck comes out too thin, move the line outward a little. Turkeys are chunky birds.

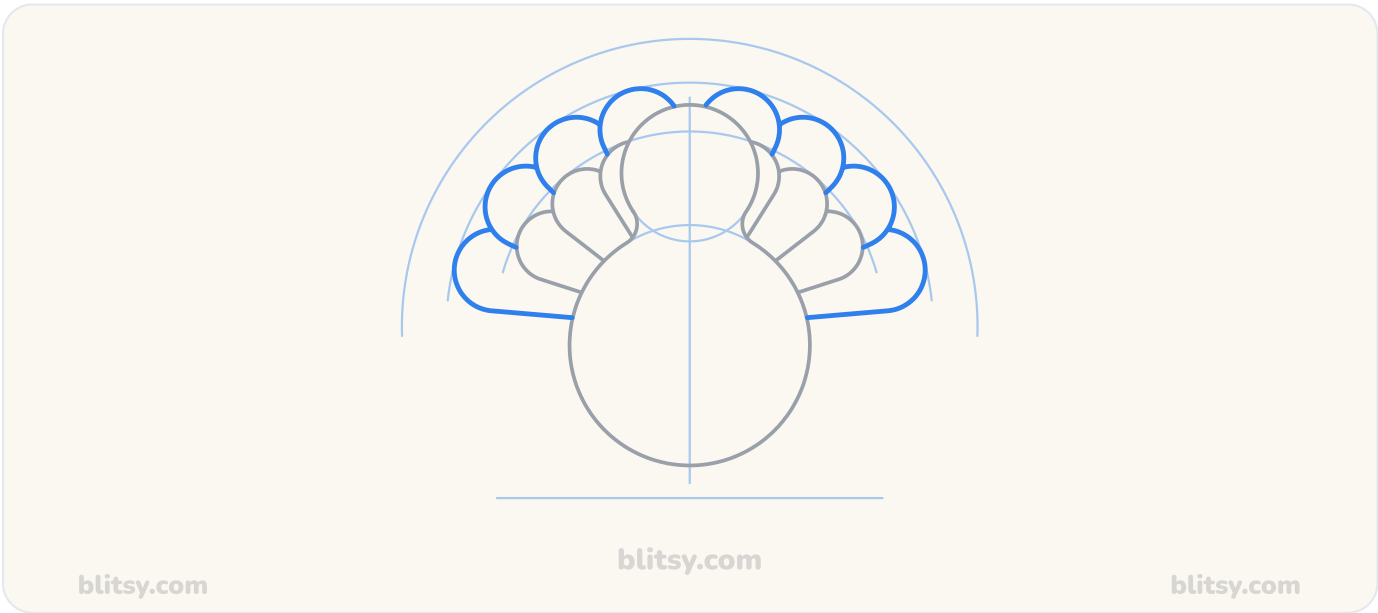
STEP 3 Draw the front row of feathers



Now for the tail. I always start with the row closest to the body, because those feathers sit in front and are drawn whole. Draw six long, rounded petals that reach out to the smallest arc, three on each side of the head. Their narrow ends tuck behind the body, so stop at the outline.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the two feathers beside the head first, then work outward in pairs. The fan stays even on both sides.

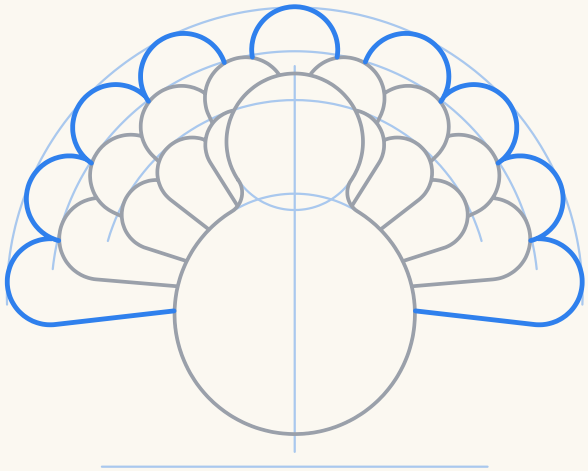
STEP 4 Add the middle row behind them



The second row peeks out from behind the first. Draw eight slightly bigger petals that reach the middle arc, placed in the gaps between the front feathers, with the two middle ones peeking up beside the head. Draw only the rounded tops you can see, stopping wherever a line touches a front feather.

💡 **Tip:** Lift your pencil when a line bumps into a front feather. Drawing through it is the most common slip here.

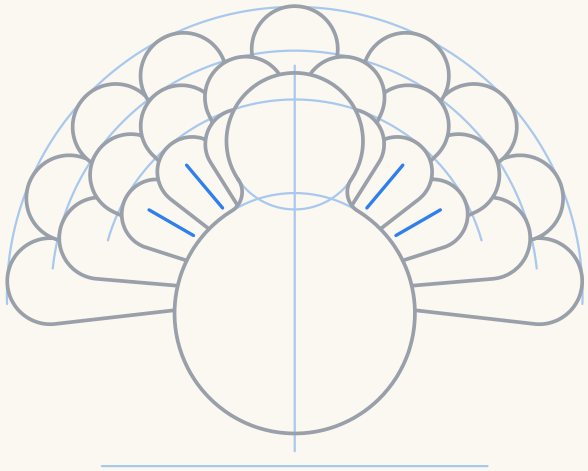
STEP 5 Finish with the back row



The back row is the biggest, with nine feathers reaching the outer arc. Put one straight above the head and spread the rest down to just above the ground on each side. Again, draw only the round tips that show between the middle feathers. When this row is done, the fan should look like a scalloped half circle.

💡 **Tip:** The lowest feathers on each side lie almost flat. That wide, low spread is what makes the tail look fanned out.

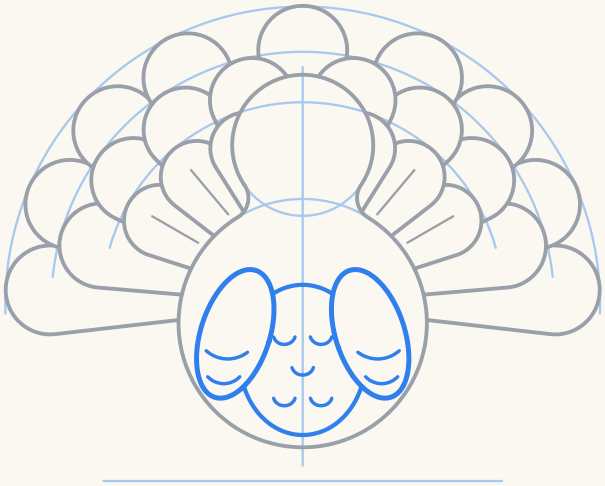
STEP 6 Draw a line down each front feather



Give every front feather a single straight line through its middle, pointing back toward the body. This is the quill, and it makes the petals read as feathers instead of flower petals. Stop before the tip.

💡 **Tip:** Keep these lines thinner and shorter than the outlines so they look like detail, not like extra shapes.

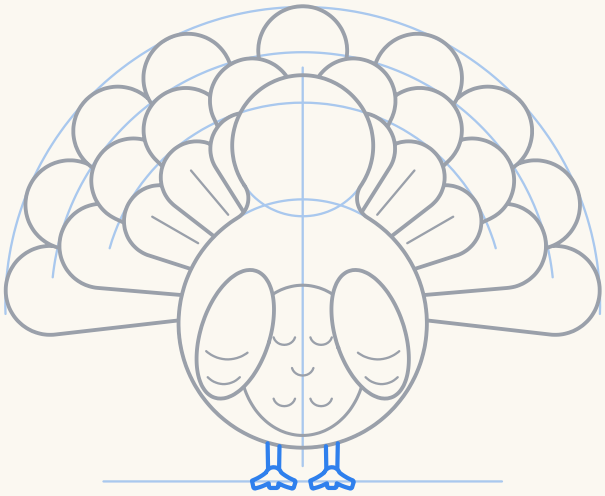
STEP 7 Add the belly and two wings



Draw a tall oval in the lower middle of the body for the lighter belly, with a few small U-shaped curves inside it for chest feathers. On each side, add a long wing shaped like a leaf that leans in at the top and hangs down at the bottom. Two short curved lines near the bottom of each wing hint at the wing feathers.

💡 **Tip:** Keep each wing just inside the body outline, so the round shape of the turkey stays unbroken.

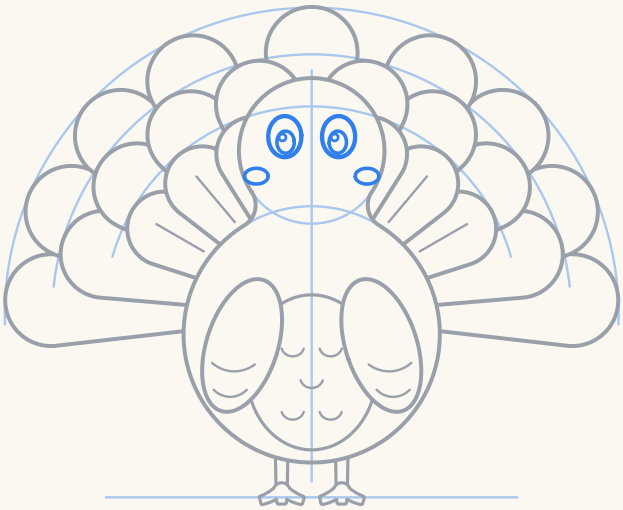
STEP 8 Give it short legs and feet



Under the body, draw two short legs a little apart, each a narrow band only as long as a finger tip. At the bottom of each leg, add three toes that spread like a bird track: one forward and one out to each side. Rest them on the ground line.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the legs short. Long legs make a cartoon turkey look like a chicken on stilts.

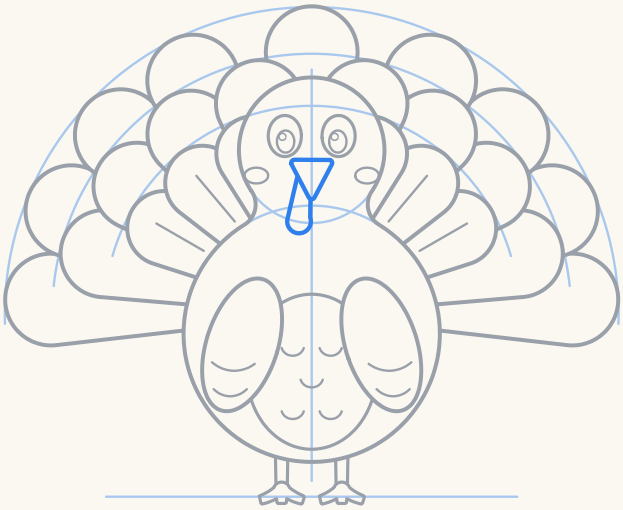
STEP 9 Draw big eyes and pink cheeks



Place two tall oval eyes on the head, close together and a little above the middle. Inside each one, draw a round pupil and a tiny shine circle near the top. Then add a small flat oval on each cheek, just below the eyes.

💡 **Tip:** Put the shine dot in the same spot in both eyes, or the turkey will look cross-eyed.

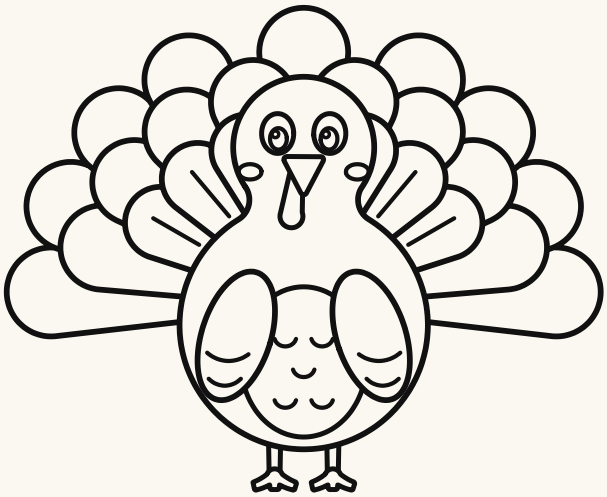
STEP 10 Add the beak and the red wattle



Right between the eyes and a bit lower, draw a small triangle pointing down for the beak, with softly rounded corners. Then hang the wattle from under it: a narrow red drop that dangles down the front of the neck, slightly to one side. That floppy skin is the detail that tells everyone this bird is a turkey.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the beak small. A large beak takes over the face and hides the wattle.

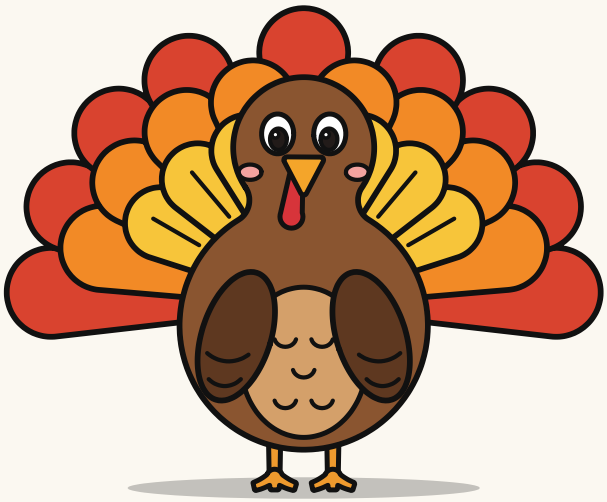
STEP 11 Ink the turkey and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with your black marker. I like to do the face first while my hand is steady, then the body, then the feathers row by row. Skip the guides. Wait for the ink to dry before you erase, or it will smear across the page.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you ink the feathers so you always pull the marker toward yourself.

STEP 12 Color your turkey



Color the back row of feathers red, the middle row orange and the front row yellow. Head and body are brown, with darker brown wings and a tan belly. Use orange for the beak and feet, red for the wattle, pink for the cheeks. Leave the eyes white with black pupils, and add a soft gray shadow on the ground.

💡 **Tip:** Press harder near the body on each feather and lighter at the tips. It gives the tail a soft glow.