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Travels with Anzie: Mexico: Boveda – The Ceiling that Defies Gravity

The “Boveda” ceiling was invented by the Moors, who conquered a goodly portion of Spain. The Spanish brought the design to the New World when they conquered Mexico. Popular here in San Miguel, the ceilings are built by one extended family of masons, who have been the boveda specialists for years. I would describe it as a vaulted ceiling without the vaults. Constructed of bricks and mortar, it curves upward anywhere from three to six feet from the base to the peak. The peak is often a cupola or a sealed point.



I have attached photos of two examples in the house we are renting. The first is our bedroom ceiling. As you can see, it comes to a sealed point. Above our bedroom is a flat rooftop terrace. The second boveda covers our living-dining-kitchen. It is topped by a glassed-in cupola, the most popular design. The last picture shows the rooftop that is sealed with cement and painted either white or red.

You would think that such a design would require some sort of temporary structure underneath to keep the bricks from falling during construction, right? Wrong!

https://picasaweb.google.com/chuckanzie/BovedaCeilings?authkey=Gv1sRgCJOw5fOYs4_dWg

To see how this amazing ceiling is built, check out the following links:

<https://vimeo.com/2379245>

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play?p=boveda+ceiling+construction&vid=1252b6e89f9373d6ab08b293c29d8589&l=3%3A21&turl=http%3A%2F%2Fts1.mm.bing.net%2Fth%3Fid%3D15.1&rurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DCiEQBboDE7s&tit=Impressively+Hand+Made+Brick+Dome+Construction&c=8&sigr=11bca8bb6&sigt=11ehoksv2&sigi=11rv3fkq1&back=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.yahoo.com%2Fyhs%2Fsearch%3Fp%3Dboveda%2Bceiling%2Bconstruction%2Bvideos%26ei%3DUTF-8%26hsimp%3Dyhs-001%26hspart%3Dmozilla&sigb=13e7t5cgm&ct=p&age=1261016187&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Av&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=mozilla&tt=b> Notice how intuitively he breaks the bricks (ladrillo) to the correct size!

http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=92b_1378597939 Don't worry about not understanding the Spanish

Hasta luego!

Chuck & Anzie