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adobe
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You'll need to make decisions about:

- floors** (Saltillo tile, brick on sand, flagstone, stamped and dyed concrete, carpet on slab, etc.)
- wall finishes** (exposed sealed adobe, plastered adobe, and the type of plaster finish)
- ceiling choices** (exposed *vigas* and *latillas*, coved ceiling, vaulted *bovédas*, ordinary sheet rock, etc).
- plus, many, many other decisions...

All of these decisions lead to a set of working drawings. Will you draft them yourself, farm them out to an experienced draftsman, or hire a contractor or architect?

Once you begin, how long will it take? An adobe contractor in Albuquerque or Tucson, can complete the average turn-key, custom adobe in four months- building one house in the spring, another in the fall, or two a year. The average owner-builder, working with fewer tools, a smaller crew, and less experience, will be lucky to finish in a year. All of these questions lead to the last question, "what will it cost ?"

YOUR COST PARAMETERS..adobe and rammed earth are do-it-yourself materials, very forgiving to the novice,



Above:
Custom two-story adobe in Corrales, New Mexico

and very green for the environment. We have codes, so we must build to a standard. And we have lifestyle expectations.

Most who want a nice adobe or rammed earth home have higher **artistic expectations**. That is, we love that ornate wrought iron light fixture from Guadalajara, the beautiful red-brown Saltillo tile floor, or the handsome round vigas, with herringbone latillas above. Not to mention the high-tech, energy-saving window units, the Mexican hand-carved entry door, or the adobe hand-shaped nichos or bancos. If your expectations are high, expect to pay more. If you can be happy with a smaller, economy adobe without all the bells and whistles, your cost can be lower- much lower. Owner builders typically cut costs by 50%.

Below:
Adobe interior by builder - artist Gary Williams of Tucson, Arizona

Costs for owner-built projects start at a low of \$55 per square foot, using salvaged and saved materials, a simple design and a few custom touches. As one adds features, a more realistic figure might be \$85.



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