



Real Estate in Mexico series - House Features

I'm going to point out a few of the features that perhaps are new to you. We want you to be knowledgeable and recognize them as you begin to preview homes.

When the Spaniards occupied Mexico, they brought with them their beautiful architecture, which included high walls and wrought iron scroll work on gates, doors and window coverings. This is truly security with style! You will find this throughout the many homes here – don't be alarmed by what appears to be elevated security. As I mentioned in a previous video, privacy and not grandstanding is the Mexican mentality.

One architectural feature, which is iconic to the state of Jalisco, is the brick cupola, a dome-like structure on top of a house. The exterior may be simple, merely plastered and painted, while some are beautifully decorated in complex patterns of tile in brilliant colors. The dome is more than just a beautiful visual feature – they do serve a function. The dome is surrounded by windows that open for ventilation – for the exit of hot air and bringing in cool breezes in the evening.

Many ceilings here are completed with boveda – arch or vault – construction. Boveda construction is a series of bricks placed between adjacent beams in concave arched configuration. The depth and the width of the arch and the design in which the bricks are placed can vary. The bricks are frequently laid with the wide face of the brick exposed to the room below. The vaulted ceiling, or domed, is truly a marvel of architectural design. You will find this in homes with an open concept layout that includes the living and dining room. Here too you will find different patterns of brick as in the boveda. Frequently, recessed lighting is tucked around the molding under the ceiling which softens and highlights the rich earth color of the bricks. Truly, whoever thought that brick ceilings could be attractive!

Because everything isn't as standardized as it is north of the border, architects here are creative in their designs. You'll be drawn to features such as stone and tile mosaics, high ceilings, arched doorways for a softer, wider entrance, handcrafted moldings and built-in niches to showcase your Mexican treasures. They seamlessly combine traditional with contemporary features and décor in very affordable homes. These are not "cookie cutter" homes in 'builder's beige' like so many of the tract-home neighborhoods you may be familiar with.

We enjoy a moderate climate year-round. It averages about 72 °F, 22 °C for you Canadians. This truly affords us year-round outdoor living. Houses are designed with large terraces and rooftop patios or *miradors*. So, imagine eating most of your meals and entertaining your guests *outside*. And the gardens! Household plants back home are full-grown trees here. You can quickly grow such a variety of flowers, cactus and fruit trees, your garden will soon become your own private park.

So, a few points to remember:

- Homes are built in a post and beam construction, not with wood framing techniques
- You will find ceiling fans in practically every room – they not only obviously cool and circulate the air, but also keep the mosquitos away. Some install A/C if a bedroom is west facing & doesn't cool down enough by nighttime.
- Furnaces, well, they're unheard of. Fireplaces do take the chill out during the winter evenings, be they gas inserts or wood burning. For those of us who have been here awhile, know that a small space heater in the bathroom is most welcome in the morning!
- Most expats have homes with state-of-the-art water purification systems, so don't worry about that
- Carports are common, not garages, and include bodegas, which are storage areas and an entrance to the laundry room or kitchen. Very convenient. Carports are often gated and you open them with an automatic opener.
- Some properties have a casita. This is a separate house, usually 1-bedroom, 1 bath with kitchenette in the back yard. Obviously, they are perfect to accommodate your guests, but remember, very good for a caretaker, use as a studio or as rental income.

And finally, a few words on words. There are several Spanish terms you will hear when looking at properties that you should be familiar with. So, please refer to our Common Spanish Real Estate Terms on the website.