The Magnificently Muddy

Uh-doe-bee!!

MicroManual
The Muddy Micromanuals are an invitation to the world of building with earth by four of the most ancient techniques known to (wo)man!

This is part 2/5 of the Muddy Micromanuals! By Sourabh Phadke. An Aman Setu Publication. Free for download. © CopyLeft.
You can find adobes just about anywhere on the planet!

cave drawings depicting the adobe lifestyle...

They are one of the most ancient building techniques. An integral part of the local culture!
Yes yes, but what is an adobe in the first place?

a dobee is not a bodee
a dobee is not a bodee
a dobee is not a bo

Well,
An adobe is a sun dried brick

Available in all shapes, sizes and flavours!
And it’s really simple (and fun!) to make them...

Mix earth and water (add husk to taste)

Nail some wooden pieces to make a mould

Throw the mix inside, press with your fingers and level the top

Lift the mould up, the adobe slides out!
Then soak up the sun

Turn to a side for even solar soakage

Ta-daa!! Ready to be used or stored

*And Remember:

Wet the mould before you chuck the mix in! The mix has to be just the right consistency. Too wet and it will slouch. Too dry and it will refuse to come out of the mould!
Here are a few species of adobes:

- Décor-a-dobe
- Jaggedobe
- Junk-a-dobe
- Chamferadobe
- Beam-a-dobe
- Hexadobe
- Insuladobe
- Trapezoidobe
- Tile-face-dobe
- Interlock-a-dobe
Adobes can also be hand shaped, multi-mould shaped or even cut like cookies!

The ‘glue’ that we use to stick adobes together is the mud mortar.

We use the same adobe earth for the mortar. Just add some extra water to the adobe mix!
The mortar is applied wherever two adobe faces meet: between courses and between neighbours.

Wet the top of the adobes.

Spread the mud mortar..

Place the adobe firmly over the joint beneath.
Mortar the neighbourly face

Firmly place the next adobe

*Always look out for:
  1) The corner angles
  2) The level of the adobe course
  3) The verticality of the wall
  4) Staggering of the joints
Doors & Windows

Frames can be embedded directly into the adobe wall and anchored with holdfasts which are inserted between courses.

The wall can now be mud plastered and painted!
Spanning...

We can span the openings by corbelling the adobes. Each one steps out with every rising course...

With some formwork and support, we can also build arches of different kinds!
The arch evolves further...
Adobes have been providing people with a roof overhead for centuries!
The Foundation:
Trenches should be dug wherever the walls are to be built. Adobe walls should be raised off the ground with a plinth.

The Roof:
The Roof should sit on a beam which distributes the load over the entire wall.