

Guatiza



About Guatiza

Leaving the coast behind, we head inland towards **Guatiza**. Immediately around the village we see fields packed full of chumberas, or prickly pear cacti. The landscape is stunning; a magnificent blue sky arches over an endless green sea made up of thousands of prickly pears growing in the volcanic ash. The really interesting thing is that they are not grown for their fruit, but rather for a small parasite that invades them.

If you look closely, you should be able to see how the plants are colonised by little whitish insects (*Dactylopus coccus*), commonly known as cochineal. The insects are used to make carmine (a natural red dye with a very strong, resistant colour) and are of great commercial value. Surrounded by prickly pear fields, Guatiza has another surprise in store for visitors with its [Cactus Garden](#), of which we will speak at greater length later. In the centre of the town of Guatiza itself, the peculiar church of Cristo de las Aguas is well worth investigating.