

- **Where:** Guacamayas, Boyacá
- **Region:** Andes
- **Material:** fique



### Fique from Guacamayas

Guacamayas is a village in the department of Boyacá, located on an ancient settlement of Lache and Tunebo Indians, who traditionally manufacture handicrafts from straw and fique. Originally, these pieces were used for food gathering and in sacred rituals and ceremonies.

Today, the artisans in Guacamayas use the same raw materials to make decorative objects: baskets, dishes, fruit bowls, place mats, etc. that change their ceremonial role for a utilitarian one, but continue to surprise for the beautiful coloring that gained them international recognition on the part of tourists who visit Colombia.

### **Raw materials: Fique and straw**

Sisal is a plant that flourishes in almost all of Colombia's climates and at almost all elevations

Vegetable fibers like fique and straw have always been used in Colombia for manufacturing artisan products. With their added advantage of being biodegradable and ecological, they have been used for making packing containers, sacks for transporting coffee and fertilizers, rope, etc.

Fique (*Furcraea andina*), also called cabuya, is a plant that grows in most climates and altitudes in Colombia. The country has an annual production of about 30,000 tons of the plant.

On the other hand, in this case, straw refers to the leaf of a palm tree. The straw must have an even thickness in order to obtain a perfect rolling and assembling of the handicraft, in such a

way that it will not become undone when manipulating it and wrapping it in fique. Artisans choose the plants from the highest regions, which are the longest and smoothest.

### The assembling technique of the Guacamayas handicrafts



Guacamayas sisal

The technique used traditionally in the manufacture of fique handicrafts in Guacamayas is called “spiral basketwork” and consists of making rolls of straw and later wrapping them with fique threads to form a flat or ascending spiral.

Fique fibers are dyed with natural pigments by means of a boiling process.

**If you like the handicrafts made of fique, a natural fiber made from the leaves of the fique plant, found in Guacamayas, you may be interested in:**

- Other handicrafts: [basketry](#) and [ruanas](#).
- Festivals in Villa de Leyva: [Wind and Kite](#) and [Lights](#) .
- [Bogotá: An inexhaustible Region](#).