Asparagus Salad with Queso Blanco

My family really enjoyed this recipe – a refreshing change from steamed asparagus! When asparagus is not in season, try fresh green beans or cauliflower. This recipe is adapted from a weekly nutrition and recipe email I receive from Oldways and the Latino Nutrition Coalition called Sarita’s Sensations. Oldways is a non-profit whose mission is to create and organize materials and educational activities about healthy eating, drinking, lifestyle and the “traditional pleasure of the table.” It is best known for developing the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid. They have recently updated their Latin American Diet Pyramid. You can access these “pyramids” and other healthy recipes at www.oldwayspt.org and www.latinonutrition.org.

Let us know if you try out this recipe and let us know what you think!

Recipe submitted by: Jodi Charvoz, MEd, RD, ACE
Recipe from: Adapted from Sarita’s Sensations

Asparagus Salad with Queso Blanco
Serves: 4
Cook time: 1-2 minutes
Ready in 120 minutes (time in the refrigerator)

Ingredients

- 1 pound asparagus, tough ends discarded and cut across diagonally in 1” pieces
- 1/3 cup finely chopped cilantro leaves
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped shallot
- Optional: add 1 Serrano chili, chopped or ½ jalapeno, chopped, for more spice!
- 1 cup grape tomatoes cut in half
- 2 oz. queso blanco, crumbled
- Vinaigrette:
  - 1 clove garlic, peeled and mashed
  - 1 Tbsp. olive oil
  - 1 tsp. fresh oregano leaves, chopped
  - 2 Tbsp. rice vinegar
  - 1 Tbsp. lime juice

Directions

1. Bring 2 ½ cups of water to boil. Add asparagus and return to a boil for 1-2 minutes (do not overcook!)
2. Rinse with cold water and drain. Place the asparagus in bowl; mix in the cilantro, shallots and chili or jalapeno (if desired).
3. Combine the vinaigrette ingredients and shake well in a container with a lid. Discard the garlic.
4. To assemble, toss the asparagus mixture with the vinaigrette, and refrigerate 1 to 2 hours.
5. Just before serving, add the tomato and the queso blanco. Stir to mix.