Tune up – it’s important!
When your uke is tuned, it will sound great — and so will you! The top string (the one closest to your chin) is the G string. The next one is the C string, the next one is E, and the bottom string (closest to your feet) is the A string. (I like to remember them by saying “Good Children Eat Apples”) If you have a good ear, you can use a piano to tune up. You can also use a pitch pipe, an electronic tuner, and yes, there’s even a free phone app for that! When you’re in tune, pluck each string from top to bottom and sing, “My dog has fleas.”

Chord #1: C
The C chord is one of the easiest and most useful chords. In fact, you can play two songs right now using only the C chord! To form a C chord, place your ring finger on the A string, right behind the third fret. Now strum all four strings. They should all sound clear.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat
C
Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream
C
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream!

Ukulele (Frère Jacques)
C
Ukulele, ukulele
C
Let it play, let it play
C
We’ll have lots of fun, we’ll have lots of fun
C
Every day, every day.
Chord #2: F
Place your middle finger on the G string (second fret) and your index finger on the E string (first fret). Make sure all the strings are clear and you have the F chord. Now, let's use the F and the C chords in a song or two!

Ain't No Bugs on Me
\[ \text{F} \quad \text{C} \]
Well there ain't no bugs on me, there ain't no bugs on me.
\[ \text{C} \]
There may be bugs on some of you mugs, but there ain't no bugs on me.

\[ \text{F} \]
Juney bug comes in the month of June
\[ \text{C} \]
lightning bug comes in May,
\[ \text{F} \]
Peanut sittin' on a railroad track,
\[ \text{C} \]
it ate a ball of yarn,
\[ \text{F} \]
We had a cat down on the farm,
\[ \text{F} \]
his heart was all a-flutter,
\[ \text{F} \]
Bed Bug comes any ol' time, but he ain't gonna stay.
\[ \text{F} \]
Along came a choo-choo down the track, Toot Toot, peanut butter.
\[ \text{F} \]
And when the baby kittens were born they all had sweaters on.

The More We Get Together
\[ \text{F} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{F} \]
The more we get together, together, together
\[ \text{F} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{F} \]
The more we get together, the happier we'll be
\[ \text{C} \quad \text{F} \]
For your friends are my friends
\[ \text{C} \quad \text{F} \]
And my friends are your friends
\[ \text{F} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{F} \]
The more we get together, the happier we'll be!

Iko Iko
\[ \text{F} \]
My grandma and your grandma were sit-tin' by the [C7] fire.
\[ \text{F} \]
My grandma told your grandma "I'm gonna set your flag on [F] fire."
\[ \text{F} \]
Talkin' 'bout, Hey now! (Hey now!) Talkin' 'bout, Hey now! (Hey now!)
\[ \text{F} \]

Chord #3: G7
Let’s call G7 the “triangle chord” because you make a triangle with your fingers: index finger on the E string (first fret), middle finger on the C string (second fret), and ring finger on the A string (second fret). (It’s an easy transition from the F chord, because the index finger stays in the same place.) Scrunch those fingers in there and strum the chord clearly. Once you know the C, F, and G7 chords, you can play about a zillion songs, here are two to start with:

This Land Is Your Land - Woody Guthrie
\[ F \quad C \]
This land is your land, this land is my land
\[ G7 \quad C \]
From California, to the New York Island
\[ F \quad C \]
From the redwood forest, to the gulfstream waters
\[ G7 \quad C \]
This land was made for you and me
\[ F \quad C \]
As I was walking, that ribbon of highway
\[ G7 \quad C \]
I saw above me an endless skyway
\[ F \quad C \]
I saw below me a golden valley
\[ G7 \quad C \]
This land was made for you and me

Mama Don’t Allow
\[ C \]
Mama don’t allow no music-playin’ ‘round here
\[ C \quad G7 \]
Mama don’t allow no music-playin’ ‘round here
\[ C \]
I don’t care what Mama don’t allow
\[ F \]
Gonna play my music anyhow
\[ C \quad G7 \]
Mama don’t allow no music-playin’ ‘round here

Mama don’t allow no hand-clappin’… foot-stompin’… ukulele-playing …

Three-chord songs include: “La Bamba”, “Twist and Shout”, “Rock Around the Clock”, “Bad Moon Rising”, “Wild Thing”, and many more.
Ben's Essential Ukulele Chords
(Allows you to play in the keys of C, G, F, D, and A)

C | C7 | F | G7
---|----|---|----
Am | G | D7 | Em
---|----|----|---
D | Bb | Dm | A
---|----|----|---
Bm | A7 | E | E7
---|----|----|---
F#m | Fm | Gm | B

Chord diagrams provided by http://jonthysell.com/