

AF-Nikkor 85 mm f/1.4 D IF	5 (F5) 5 (D1) 5 (D1X, D2X) 5 (FX: D3, D3X) IR: 5 (D200 modified)	<p>A superb chunk of glass, the AF lens outperforms its MF 85/1.4 predecessor by a comfortable margin at wide apertures, equals the MF lens at f/5.6 and is less sharp in the f/8-f/16 range. Since most people would buy an 85/1.4 for low-light photography potential, the choice of the AF lens vs. the MF is easy: Go for the AF. I have shot many pictures with it using it wide open and the results are simply stunning. The image rendition improves up to the peak performance at f/2.8-f/4. Its IF construction makes focusing it manually a breeze and its AF action is very fast on the F5 or D1/D2 models, but not entirely noise-free.</p> <p>Images are rendered with acute sharpness, very high contrast and vivid colour saturation. The aperture is controlled by 9 blades and is nicely rounded, thus ensuring good 'bokeh' and a pleasing rendition of the out-of-focus areas. In this respect it surpasses the MF version by a comfortable margin.</p> <p>Due to its large front element, the AF 85 flares quite easily and the substantial lens hood should always be used. By the way, although it sports a 77 mm filter thread, the 6T close-up lens can be used on the AF 85 without vignetting and gives very good results.</p> <p>The only criticism of this lens, apart from its elevated price, is the possible presence of a slight colour fringing in high-contrast objects that are out of focus, given the lens is stopped well down. This results from the IF design used and the same problem occurs to a greater or lesser extent for all IF lenses. Occasionally, if you shoot test charts with the lens wide open, you can observe a reddish tinge to black objects immediately in front of the focus plane, with a greenish cast just behind it. The 200/2 behaves similar.</p> <p>The D3 adverts depict the D3 with the 85/1.4 AFD and the same lens is used for illustrations in the D3 manual. No wonder, since the 85/1.4 AFD performs superbly on this camera. Even the wide-open captures are as good as anything I ever seen before.</p> <p>IR performance: Similar to the MF version, this fast lens is - rather unexpectedly - a good IR performer and there are no evident hot spots.</p>
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