

Nikkor AF 85mm f/1.4D - Review / Test Report

Lens Reviews - Nikon / Nikkor (APS-C)
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2 samples of the lens kindly provided for testing purposes by Peter Poete and Volker Muehlhaus!

Introduction

The Nikkor AF 85mm f/1.4D is one of Nikon's ultra-large aperture fix-focal length lenses and, besides its little sister lens (AF 85mm f/1.8D) one of the classic portrait lenses. At around 1200€/US\$ you pay a hefty (three-fold) premium for the extra f-stop but then there's no substitution for a large aperture but a larger one.

As usual we'll have a look how it performs on a modern APS-C DSLR (Nikon D200) where its field-of-view is equivalent to 127mm on classic full-frame cameras. As such it doesn't leave its original scope.



The AF 85mm f/1.4D is a beautifully crafted lens with most parts made of metal with the typical crinkle finish used for Nikon's pro grade lenses. The rubberized focus ring operates very smooth and slightly damped. The AF 85mm f/1.4D is a true IF (internal focusing) design so its length remains constant regardless of the focus setting and the front element does not rotate. Using a polarizer is therefore no problem. The lens has no internal AF motor and relies on a slotted drive screw operated by the camera. As a result the AF generates a moderate degree of noise. The AF speed is pretty fast thanks to a rear-focusing system.

Specifications

Optical construction	9 elements in 8 groups
Number of aperture blades	9 (rounded)
min. focus distance	0.85m (max. magnification ratio 1:8.8)
Dimensions	80x73mm
Weight	550g
Filter size	77mm (non-rotating)
Hood	Nikon HN-31, barrel shaped (screw-in)
Other features	Lens provides distance (D) information to the camera.

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