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Nikon AF 85mm f/1.4D

Nikon AF 85mm

What can I possibly say about this legend of a lens in the Nikon user community. If you want the absolutely best lens for portraits you can possibly get, stop looking now. Even with all the new lenses available with all the technological wizardry, this lens remains my favorite lens bar none. If you've never shot a lens with a f/1.4 aperture, you will be amazed at the amount of light that this lens allows in. The bokeh is simply stunning, this is the sort of lens that can make an average photographer seem a lot better than they are because of the effortless way it tells a story by isolating the subject in a flattering way.

In the current Nikon lens line-up, this is quite an old lens since it was first introduced in the mid 1990's but I'd be very nervous if they were to ever update it as I'd be so worried they'd ruin the magic (it will of course get updated, we'll have to wait and see about the magic). It is a heavy lens and quite expensive (although it looks like an absolute bargain next to the Canon equivalent) but if I ever lost mine I would buy another the very next day. For everybody that cannot reasonably justify \$1000 or £700 for a portrait lens, the Nikon 85mm f/1.8 is also an excellent lens with many of the same qualities but it doesn't quite have the same ability to render the scene so well. The good news is that this lens is also good for many other things, and I even take it with me sometimes when shooting landscapes for fun. The big issue, and really the only negative I can say about this beauty, is that it can have quite nasty CA when close to wide open depending on the scene. Once you know how to handle this lens, you can work with this though and the lens really is meant to be shot close to maximum aperture. It is very good at f/1.4 and excellent by f/2, and I never really go much past f/5.6 as if that's what you need you wasted a lot of money on this lens. In fact, if you are going to be shooting primarily beyond f/4 most of the time, the cheaper little gem of a lens, the 85mm f/1.8 is probably ever so slightly better there. Always use the hood with the f/1.4 (no matter what that colorful personality says on that K.R. website), it is a little out of date being a screw-on hood, but apart from helping with contra light it helps to protect that large front element a little. The build quality is typical Nikon pro level, excellent. This lens is a portrait photographers dream, if you are serious about this aspect of photography, go and buy it right now and beg, borrow, sell you house, just make sure you have this lens as you'll never be sorry you bought it.





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