

Micro-Nikkor AF 200mm f/4 D ED - Review / Test Report

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Lens kindly provided for testing purposes by Peter-Cornelius Spaeth!

Introduction

The Micro-Nikkor AF 200mm f/4 D ED is a fairly old lens introduced back in 1993 and it is among the methusalems within the current Nikon lens line-up. The history of Nikon's long Micro-Nikkors dates back quite a bit longer (to 1978). Typical for lenses of early 90s the design is still fairly conservative with relatively few elements and groups - certainly a good thing regarding long term reliability. Obviously it is a full frame lens but, as usual, we will have a look how it performs on an APS-C body (Nikon D200) where its field-of-field of the lens is equivalent to 300mm.

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The Nikkor is a long but fairly lean lens (see below). As the name implies it is a macro lens with a min. focus distance of 0.5m resulting in a max. object magnification of 1:1 and a min. working distance of min. ~26cm to the front element. At 1:1 the max. aperture decreases to f/5.3. The adjusted aperture value is displayed in the viewfinder. The build quality of the Nikkor is superb thanks to an outer barrel made of metal. This has naturally also an impact on the weight which is quite hefty at around 1190g. The broad, rubberized focus ring operates very smooth without being damped. Formally the Nikkor has no internal focus (the inner lens tube moves) but the physical length remains constant and the lens front does not rotate. The lens hood is an optional item despite the very high price tag of the lens - a bit disappointing especially because the inner tube isn't always deeply recessed. Nikon did also implement a non-detachable tripod mount. Certainly a good idea for a better balance when used on a tripod.



The Nikkor uses an independent ring (rather stiff) for switching between AF and manual focusing - a dated design compared current AF-S lenses. Typical for these lenses it 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 very slow due to the extremely long focus path. A focus limiter is available to prevent excessive focus hunting when using the lens for conventional (non-macro) photography. Even so the lens is no speed daemon here.

Specifications

Optical construction	13 elements in 8 groups inc. 2 ED elements
Number of aperture blades	9
min. focus distance	0.5m (max. magnification ratio 1:1)
Dimensions	193x76mm
Weight	1190g
Filter size	62mm (non-rotating)
Hood	Nikon HN-30 (optional), barrel-shaped, screw-in type
Other features	Lens provides distance (D) information

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