

Nikon Micro Nikkor 200mm f/4 D (IF) ED Interchangeable Lens Review

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This lens is the longest focal length in Nikon's line-up of Macro lenses. Nikon call them Micro, but they do the same job as everybody else's Macro lenses and that is to produce images that are a 1:1 ratio on the film or sensor. Not only is it Nikon's longest, but the longest prime macro lens available. We take a look at how it performs.

Specification

- Focal Length 200mm
- Aperture f/4
- Angle of view N/A°
- Filter size 62mm
- Construction 13/8 elements/groups
- Focus type Internal
- Closest focus 500mm (1:1)
- Weight 1190g
- Dimensions 76x193mm
- Mounts available Nikon
- Tripod bush Yes,
- Price (SRP) £1300

Build and Handling

The lens comes supplied in a hard, tubular leatherette case that immediately shouts quality at you. The case is lined with brown velvet that further re-enforces this feel. Withdrawing the lens from the case reveals a solid looking piece of equipment, metal bodied, with a huge focus ring that occupies almost half the barrel.



Immediately in front of the mount is the aperture ring with a lock at f/32 for modern auto cameras. The non-removable tripod mount ring takes up the next 32mm. The fact that the mount could not be removed did not prove a problem for two reasons, firstly, the lens proved virtually impossible to hand hold and secondly the mount itself was fairly low profile and did not protrude.

Forward of this is a distance window which is marked with a depth-of-field scale that is safely in the category of 'completely useless'! Marked at f/32 only, it looked more like an arrowhead and only served to highlight one of the biggest drawbacks of this type of lens. More later. Alongside is a limit switch for the focus.

Next up is the AF/MF switchover ring, a dated affair with a small press-button lock. The remainder of the lens barrel is taken up with over 75mm of focus ring, which has a very nice feel to it, something that is handy as the full focus travel takes three quarters of a turn.

Autofocusing was painfully slow and quite noisy by modern standards. It was, however, accurate to the selected focus point on the camera. It is not possible to over-ride the autofocus manually without changing the switch to manual.

Optical Quality

This lens is an adequate performer, but again by modern standards, not outstanding. Due to the long focal length (for a macro), focussing is critical as very little depth-of-field is achievable. Distortions and aberrations of all kinds are well controlled, as they should be with the inclusion of ED glass. Sharpness is good within this limited depth-of-field.



At f/5.6 the DOF is negligible



At f/13. Still not great



At f/9 it has improved, but not much better



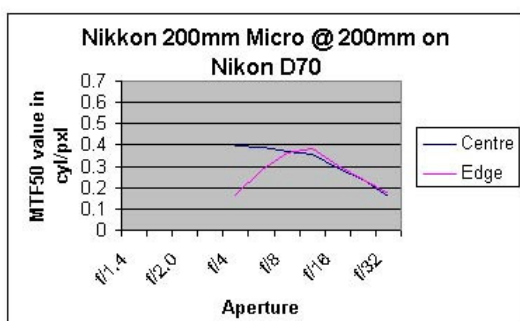
Nikon 200mm set at f/4



Nikon 200mm set at f/8

Click on each of these two comparison photos to view full size versions

Below is our lens test data. To find out how to use this graph look at this article: [How we test lenses](#)



Verdict

Despite its obvious quality, this lens does seem to be a little long in the tooth. More suited to specialised macro duties on a tripod than as a general purpose macro lens, it prove extremely hard to hand hold and get decent results. If you are thinking that the long focal length will be ideal for chasing bugs and butterflies, you will need to go crashing through the undergrowth with a tripod in tow! Consider a 70-200mm VR and extension ring instead. A lens in need of an update.

In summary the main positive points of the Micro Nikkor 200mm f/4 D (IF) ED are:

- Exceptional build quality
- Good tripod collar (needed)
- Good CA/distortion control

Negative points are:

- Geriatric autofocus
- Dated switching
- Narrow depth-of-field

Check the latest price of the [Micro Nikkor 200mm f/4 D \(IF\) ED here](#) and help support the site.

Test by Ian Andrews www.wildaboutkent.co.uk