

Nikon AF-Nikkor 50mm 1:1.4D review

Andy Westlake, September 2008



The AF-Nikkor 50mm 1:1.4D is Nikon's current version of their fast 'standard' prime lens, and while this specific model was introduced in 1995, the basic optical design dates back to the manual focus 50mm 1:1.4 AI of 1977. It features a traditional layout of 7 elements in 6 groups utilizing spherical surfaces only, which Nikon claims will deliver distortion-free images with superb resolution and colour accuracy, plus high contrast even at maximum aperture. The 50mm focal length classes it as a 'standard' lens on the FX format, with none of the 'perspective distortion' characteristic of wideangle or telephoto lenses, whilst on the vastly more popular and widespread DX format it behaves like a short telephoto, ideal for portraiture.

The 50mm 1:1.4 is one of the older lenses in Nikon's lineup, and this is reflected in several aspects of its design. The lens features a traditional aperture ring, which will no doubt be appreciated by photographers who grew up with mechanical manual-focus 35mm SLRs such as the FM range (although the only DSLRs on which it can actually be used are the high-end D1-D3 and D100-D700 bodies); however autofocus is 'screw-drive' from the camera body, and therefore won't work on the entry-level D40, D40x and D60.

Like the [Canon EF 50mm F1.4 USM](#) which we've recently reviewed, the Nikon 50mm 1:1.4D commands a hefty price premium over its little brother in the range, the AF-Nikkor 50mm 1:1.8D. It's also up against stiff competition in the shape of the impressive new [Sigma 50mm F1.4 EX DG HSM](#) and the Carl Zeiss Planar 50mm F1.4 T*, although both of these lenses are considerably more expensive, and the Zeiss is manual focus only. So what does the Nikkor have to offer in this day and age?

Headline features

- 50mm focal length
- Fast F1.4 maximum aperture

Angle of view

The pictures below illustrate the angles of view on FX (35mm full frame) and DX camera bodies:



Nikon AF-Nikkor 50mm 1:1.4D specifications

Street price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$290 US • £190 UK
Date introduced	1995
Maximum format size	35mm full frame
Focal length	50mm
35mm equivalent focal length (APS-C)	75mm
Diagonal Angle of view (FF)	47°
Diagonal Angle of view (APS-C)	31°
Maximum aperture	F1.4
Minimum aperture	F16
Lens Construction	7 elements/6 groups
Number of diaphragm blades	7
Minimum focus	0.45m
Maximum magnification	0.15x
AF motor type	• 'Screw drive' from camera body
Focus method	Unit
Image stabilization	• None
Filter thread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52mm • Does not rotate on focus
Supplied accessories	• Front and rear caps
Optional accessories	• Lens Hood HR-2
Weight	230g (8.1 oz)
Dimensions	64.5mm diameter x 42.5mm length (2.5 x 1.7 in)
Lens Mount	Nikon F only

* Supplied accessories may differ in each country or area

Foreword / notes

If you're new to digital photography you may wish to read some of our [Digital Photography Glossary](#) before diving into this article (it may help you understand some of the terms used).

Conclusion / recommendation / ratings are based on the opinion of the author, we recommend that you read the entire review before making any decision. Images which can be viewed at a larger size have a small magnifying glass icon in the bottom right corner of them, click to display a larger image in a new window.

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Dpreview use calibrated monitors at the PC normal gamma 2.2, this means that on our monitors we can make out the difference between all of the grayscale blocks below. We recommend to make the most of this review you should be able to see the difference (at least) between X,Y and Z and ideally also A, B and C.

