

Nikkor AF-S 50mm f/1.4 G (FX) - Review / Test Report

Lens Reviews - Nikon / Nikkor (full format)

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Introduction

The Nikkor AF-S 50 is one of the more recent additions to the Nikon lens line up, adding a modern sonic wave drive to what's considered one of the "bread and butter" lenses of any system: the normal prime lens. These lenses have a high reputation among photographers, because they usually offer very high quality at an affordable price.

So, without further ado, let's have a look at how this latest evolution of a classic 50 mm lens performs on a full frame camera, the Nikon D3x which starting with this review will serve as our FX test camera.

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The build quality of the lens is very decent thanks to an outer barrel made out of high quality plastics. The rubberized focus ring is slightly damped and operates reasonably smooth.

The physical length of the lens remains constant at all focus settings. It's not a true IF (internal focus) design though - the inner tube moves within the outer barrel (linear extension focusing system).

The front element does not rotate so using a polarizer remains easily possible. The filter thread has a diameter of 58 mm which is fairly uncommon for current Nikkor lenses but it's probably just the first lens to feature this filter size with more lenses to come in the near future. A dedicated hood with bayonet mount (no more screwing) is now included with the lens.



As an AF-S lens the Nikkor is compatible with all current Nikon DSLRs (including the motor-free entry level cameras like D60 and D5000) and features all the advantages of a silent wave (ultrasonic) drive. Well, almost all, there's manual override at any time and silent operation but the AF speed is not overly fast. It's okay for everyday use, however, the older screw-driven AF-D 50/1.4 feels faster on high end bodies (like the D3x used for testing).

Specifications

Optical construction	8 elements in 7 groups
Number of aperture blades	9 (rounded)
min. focus distance	0.45m
Dimensions	73.5mm x 54mm
Weight	280g
Filter size	58mm (non-rotating)
Hood	Nikon HB-47, barrel shaped, bayonet mount (supplied)
Other features	Silent-wave AF motor.

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