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Nikkor AF-S 300mm f/4D IF-ED - Review / Test Report

Lens Reviews - Nikon / Nikkor (APS-C)

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Review by Klaus Schroiff, published July 2006

Lens kindly provided for testing purposes by Josef Merk!

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Introduction

The Nikkor AF-S 300mm f/4D IF-ED is the longest tele fix-focal length lens in the current line-up that remains within the financial reach (around 1250€/US$) of serious amateurs. Surprisingly Nikon does not offer an AF-S 400mm f/5.6 so for anything longer you either have to add a tele-converter or go for the AF 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D ED VR which has about the same form factor.

Released back in the early 2000 the AF-S 300mm f/4 is obviously a full format lens. In the tested APS-C scope (Nikon D200) the field-of-view is equivalent to classic 450mm. The Nikkor AF-S 1.4x extends the reach to 420mm (630mm equiv.) f/5.6.



The build quality of the lens is exceptionally high. The outer barrel is made of metal with a silky finish. The very broad, rubberized focus ring operates very smooth and slightly damped. A build-in telescope lens hood (lockable) is also supplied. In order to provide a more balanced usage on a tripod or monopod Nikon also implemented a detachable tripod-collar.

The AF-S 300mm f/4 is a true IF (internal focusing) design so its length remains constant regardless of the focus setting and the front element does not rotate. Using a polarizer is therefore no problem unless you extend the lens hood. Thanks to a silent-wave motor the AF is very fast and near-silent.

Specifications

Equiv. focal length	450 mm (full format equivalent)
Equiv. aperture	f/6 (full format equivalent, in terms of depth-of-field)
Optical construction	10 elements in 6 groups inc. 2 ED elements
Number of aperture blades	9 (rounded)
min. focus distance	1.45 m (max. magnification ratio 1:3.7)
Dimensions	90 x 223 mm
Weight	1440 g
Filter size	77 mm (non-rotating)
Hood	barrel shaped (build-in)
Other features	Lens provides distance information (D). Tripod collar.

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