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IN FULL COLOR!

Julie Adair King
Author of all editions of Digital Photography For Dummies

Canon® EOS Rebel T1i/500D FOR DUMMIES®

by Julie Adair King
Author of Digital Photography For Dummies

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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Introduction

In 2003, when Canon introduced the very first under-$1,000 digital SLR camera, the EOS Digital Rebel/300D, it revolutionized the camera scene. For the first time, photography enthusiasts could enjoy the benefits of digital SLR photography without breaking the bank. And even at the then-unheard-of price, the camera delivered exceptional performance and picture quality, earning it rave reviews and multiple industry awards. No wonder it quickly became a best seller.

That tradition of excellence and value lives on in the EOS Rebel T1i/500D. Like its ancestors, this baby offers the range of advanced controls that experienced photographers demand plus an assortment of tools designed to help beginners to be successful as well. Adding to the fun, this camera also brings a brand new feature to the Rebel line: the option to record short, high-definition digital movies.

This Rebel is so feature-packed, in fact, that it can be a challenge to sort everything out, especially if you're new to digital photography, SLR photography, or both. For starters, you may not even be sure what SLR means or how it affects your picture taking, let alone have a clue as to all the other techie terms you encounter in your camera manual — resolution, aperture, white balance, format, and so on. And if you're like many people, you may be so overwhelmed by all the controls on your camera that you haven't yet ventured beyond fully automatic picture-taking mode. And that's a shame because it's sort of like buying a Porsche and never actually taking it on the road.

Therein lies the point of *Canon EOS Rebel T1i/500D For Dummies.* Through this book, you can discover not just what each bell and whistle on your camera does, but also when, where, why, and how to put it to best use. Unlike many photography books, this one doesn't require any previous knowledge of photography or digital imaging to make sense of things, either. In classic *For Dummies* style, everything is explained in easy-to-understand language, with lots of illustrations to help clear up any confusion.

In short, what you have in your hands is the paperback version of an in-depth photography workshop tailored specifically to your Canon picture-taking powerhouse. Whether your interests lie in taking family photos, exploring nature and travel photography, or snapping product shots for your business, you'll get the information you need to capture the images you envision.

A Quick Look at What's Ahead

This book is organized into four parts, each devoted to a different aspect of using your camera. Although chapters flow in a sequence that's designed to take you from absolute beginner to experienced user, I also tried to make each chapter as self-standing as possible so that you can explore the topics that interest you in any order you please.

The following sections offer brief previews of each part. If you're eager to find details on a specific topic, the index shows you exactly where to look.

Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps

Part I contains four chapters that help you get up and running with your Rebel T1i/500D:

- Chapter 1, "Getting the Lay of the Land," offers a tour of the external controls on your camera, shows you how to navigate camera menus to access internal options, and walks you through initial camera setup and customization steps.
- Chapter 2, "Taking Great Pictures, Automatically," shows you how to get the best results when using the camera's fully automatic exposure modes, including Portrait, Sports, and Landscape modes. It also features the new Creative Auto mode, which makes it easy for you to take a little more artistic control over your photos.
- Chapter 3, "Controlling Picture Quality," introduces you to one setting that's critical whether you shoot in automatic or manual mode: the Quality setting, which affects resolution (pixel count), file format, file size, and picture quality.
- Chapter 4, "Monitor Matters: Picture Playback, Live View, and Movie Mode" explains how to review your pictures on the camera monitor, delete unwanted images, and protect your favorites from accidental erasure. In addition, this chapter introduces you to Live View shooting, in which you can use your monitor as a viewfinder, and explains your camera's movie-recording features.

Part II: Taking Creative Control

Chapters in this part help you unleash the full creative power of your camera by moving into semiautomatic or manual photography modes.

- Chapter 5, "Getting Creative with Exposure and Lighting," covers the all-important topic of exposure, starting with an explanation of three critical exposure controls: aperture, shutter speed, and ISO. This

chapter also discusses your camera's advanced exposure modes (P, Tv, Av, M, and A-DEP), explains exposure options such as metering mode and exposure compensation, and offers tips for using the built-in flash.

- Chapter 6, "Manipulating Focus and Color," provides help with controlling those aspects of your pictures. Look here for information about your camera's automatic and manual focusing features as well as details about color controls such as white balance and the Picture Style options.
- Chapter 7, "Putting It All Together," summarizes all the techniques explained in earlier chapters, providing a quick-reference guide to the camera settings and shooting strategies that produce the best results for specific types of pictures: portraits, action shots, landscape scenes, close-ups, and more.

Part III: Working with Picture Files

This part of the book, as its title implies, discusses the often-confusing aspect of moving your pictures from camera to computer and beyond.

- Chapter 8, "Downloading, Organizing, and Archiving Your Photos," guides you through the process of transferring pictures from your camera memory card to your computer's hard drive or other storage device. Just as important, this chapter explains how to organize and safeguard your photo files.
- Chapter 9, "Printing and Sharing Your Photos," helps you turn your digital files into "hard copies," covering both retail and do-it-yourself printing options. This chapter also explains how to prepare your pictures for online sharing and, for times when you have the neighbors over, how to display your pictures on a television screen.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

In famous *For Dummies* tradition, the book concludes with two "top ten" lists containing additional bits of information and advice.

- Chapter 10, "Ten Fast Photo-Editing Tricks," shows you how to fix less-than-perfect images using the free software provided with your camera. You can find out how to remove red-eye, adjust color and exposure, crop your photos, and more.
- Chapter 11, "Ten Special-Purpose Features to Explore on a Rainy Day," presents information about some camera features that, while not found on most "Top Ten Reasons I Bought My Rebel T1i/500D" lists, are nonetheless interesting, useful on occasion, or a bit of both.

Icons and Other Stuff to Note

If this isn't your first *For Dummies* book, you may be familiar with the large, round icons that decorate its margins. If not, here's your very own icon-decoder ring:

I apply this icon either to introduce information that's especially worth storing in your brain's long-term memory or to remind you of a fact that may have been displaced from that memory by some other pressing fact.

When you see this icon, look alive. It indicates a potential danger zone that can result in much wailing and teeth-gnashing if ignored.

Lots of information in this book is of a technical nature — digital photography is a technical animal, after all. But if I present a detail that is useful mainly for impressing your technology-geek friends, I mark it with this icon.

A Tip icon flags information that will save you time, effort, money, or some other valuable resource, including your sanity.

Additionally, I need to point out a few other details that will help you use this book:

- **Other margin art:** Replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen graphics also appear in the margins of some paragraphs and in some tables. I include these to provide a quick reminder of the appearance of the button or option being discussed.
- **Software menu commands:** In sections that cover software, a series of words connected by an arrow indicates commands that you choose from the program menus. For example, if a step tells you to "Choose File➪Print," click the File menu to unfurl it and then click the Print command on the menu.
- **Camera firmware:** *Firmware* is the internal software that controls many of your camera's operations. This book was written using version 1.0.9 of the firmware, which was the most current at the time of publication.

  Occasionally, Canon releases firmware updates, and it's a good idea to check the Canon Web site (www.canon.com) periodically to find out whether any updates are available. (Chapter 1 tells you how to determine which firmware version your camera is running.) Firmware updates typically don't carry major feature changes — they're mostly used to solve technical glitches in existing features — but if you do download an update, be sure to read the accompanying description of what it accomplishes so that you can adapt my instructions as necessary.

About the Software Shown in This Book

Providing specific instructions for performing photo organizing and editing tasks requires that I feature specific software. In sections that cover file downloading, organizing, printing, and e-mail sharing, I selected Canon EOS Utility along with Canon ZoomBrowser EX (for Windows users) and ImageBrowser (for Mac users). These programs are part of the free software suite that ships with your camera.

Rest assured, though, that the tools used in these programs work very similarly in other programs, so you should be able to easily adapt the steps to whatever software you use. (I recommend that you read your software manual for details, of course.)

Practice, Be Patient, and Have Fun!

To wrap up this preamble, I want to stress that if you initially think that digital photography is too confusing or too technical for you, you're in very good company. *Everyone* finds this stuff a little mind-boggling at first. So take it slowly, experimenting with just one or two new camera settings or techniques at first. Then, each time you go on a photo outing, make it a point to add one or two more shooting skills to your repertoire.

I know that it's hard to believe when you're just starting out, but it really won't be long before everything starts to come together. With some time, patience, and practice, you'll soon wield your camera like a pro, dialing in the necessary settings to capture your creative vision almost instinctively.

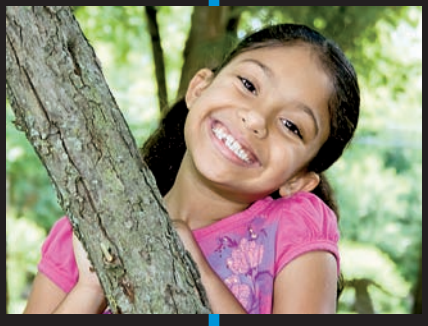
So without further ado, I invite you to grab your camera, a cup of whatever it is you prefer to sip while you read, and start exploring the rest of this book. Your Rebel T1i/500D is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and I thank you for allowing me, through this book, to serve as your tour guide.

Part I

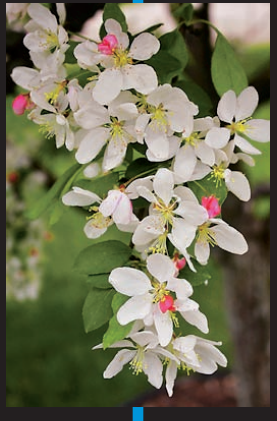
Fast Track to Super Snaps

In this part . . .

Making sense of all the controls on your Rebel T1i/500D isn't something you can do in an afternoon — heck, in a week, or maybe even a month. But that doesn't mean that you can't take great pictures today. By using your camera's point-and-shoot automatic modes, you can capture terrific images with very little effort. All you do is compose the scene, and the camera takes care of almost everything else.



This part shows you how to take best advantage of your camera's automatic features and also addresses some basic setup steps, such as adjusting the viewfinder to your eyesight and getting familiar with the camera menus, buttons, and dials. In addition, chapters in this part explain how to obtain the very best picture quality, whether you shoot in an automatic or manual mode, how to review your photos, and how to use your camera's Live View and movie-making features.



1

Getting the Lay of the Land

In This Chapter

- Attaching and using an SLR lens
- Working with camera memory cards
- Getting acquainted with external camera controls
- Decoding viewfinder and monitor information
- Selecting options from menus
- Using the Shooting Settings and Quick Control displays
- Customizing basic camera operations

I still remember the day that I bought my first SLR film camera. I was excited to finally move up from my point-and-shoot camera, but I was a little anxious, too. My new pride and joy sported several unfamiliar buttons and dials, and the explanations in the camera manual clearly were written for someone with an engineering degree. And there was the whole business of attaching the lens to the camera, an entirely new task for me. I saved my pennies a long time for that camera — what if my inexperience caused me to damage the thing before I even shot my first pictures?

You may be feeling similarly insecure if your Rebel T1i/500D is your first SLR, although some of the buttons on the camera back may look familiar if you've previously used a digital point-and-shoot camera. If your Rebel is both your first SLR and first digital camera, you may be doubly intimidated.

Trust me, though, that your camera isn't nearly as complicated as its exterior makes it appear. With a little practice and the help of this chapter, which introduces you to each external control, you'll quickly become as comfortable with your camera's buttons and dials as you are with the ones on your car's dashboard.

This chapter also guides you through the process of mounting and using an SLR lens, working with digital memory cards, and navigating your camera's internal menus. Finally, the end of the chapter walks you through options that enable you to customize many aspects of your camera's basic operation.

Before you start exploring this chapter, be sure that you fully charge your camera battery and then install it into the battery chamber on the bottom of the camera. I'm guessing that you already took this step, but if not and you need help, the front part of the camera manual provides details.

Getting Comfortable with Your Lens

One of the biggest differences between a point-and-shoot camera and an SLR *(single-lens reflex)* camera is the lens. With an SLR, you can swap out lenses to suit different photographic needs, going from an extreme close-up lens to a super-long telephoto, for example. Additionally, an SLR lens has a movable focusing ring that gives you the option of focusing manually instead of relying on the camera's autofocus mechanism.

Of course, those added capabilities mean that you need a little background information to take full advantage of your lens. To that end, the next three sections explain the process of attaching, removing, and using this critical part of your camera.

Attaching a lens

Your camera can accept two categories of Canon lenses: those with an EF-S design and those with a plain-old EF design.

The EF stands for *electro focus;* the S, for *short back focus.* And no, you don't need to remember what the abbreviation stands for — just make sure that if you buy a Canon lens other than the one sold with the camera, it carries either the EF or EF-S specification. (The letters are part of the lens name; for example, the kit lens name is EF-S 18-55mm IS, with the IS standing for *image stabilization,* a feature explained later in this chapter.) If you want to buy a non-Canon lens, check the lens manufacturer's Web site to find out which lenses work with the Rebel T1i/500D.

Whatever lens you choose, follow these steps to attach it to the camera body:

1. **Remove the cap at covers the lens mount on the front of the camera.**
2. **Remove the cap that covers the back of the lens.**

3. **Locate the proper lens mounting index on the camera body.**

   A *mounting index* is simply a marker that tells you where to align the lens with the camera body when connecting the two. Your camera has two of these markers, one red and one white, as shown in Figure 1-1.

   Which marker you use to align your lens depends on the lens type:

   - *Canon EF-S lens:* The white square is the mounting index.
   - *Canon EF lens:* The red dot is the mounting index.

   If you buy a non-Canon lens, check the lens manual for help with this step.

4. **Align the mounting index on the lens with the correct one on the camera body.**

   The lens also has a mounting index; Figure 1-2 shows the one that appears on the so-called "kit lens" — the EF-S 18–55mm IS (image stabilizer) zoom lens that Canon sells as a unit with the Rebel T1i/500D. If you buy a different lens, the index marker may be red or some other color, so again, check the lens instruction manual.

Figure 1-1: Which index marker you should use depends on the lens type.

5. **Keeping the mounting indexes aligned, position the lens on the camera's lens mount.**

   When you do so, grip the lens by its back collar as shown in the figure.

6. **Turn the lens in a clockwise direction until the lens clicks into place.**

   In other words, turn the lens toward the lens-release button (see Figure 1-1), as indicated by the red arrow in Figure 1-2.

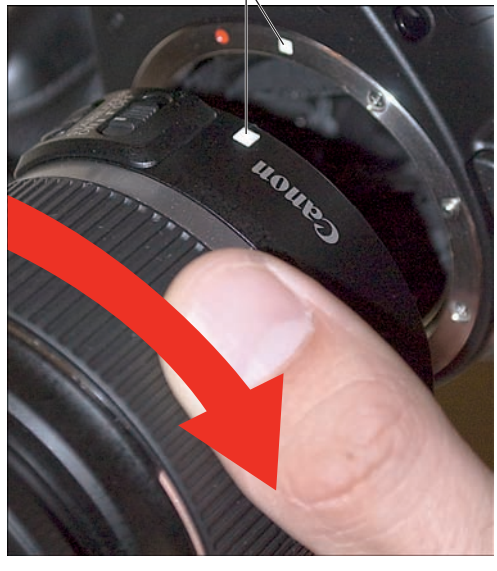


Figure 1-2: Place the lens in the lens mount with the mounting indexes aligned.

Always attach (or switch) lenses in a clean environment to reduce the risk of getting dust, dirt, and other contaminants inside the camera or lens. Changing lenses on a sandy beach, for example, isn't a good idea. For added safety, point the camera body slightly down when performing this maneuver, as shown in the figure. Doing so helps prevent any flotsam in the air from being drawn into the camera by gravity.

Removing a lens

To detach a lens from the camera body, take these steps:

1. **Locate the lens-release button on the front of the camera.**

   I labeled the button in Figure 1-1.

2. **Grip the rear collar of the lens.**

   In other words, hold onto the stationary part of the lens that's closest to the camera body.

3. **Press the lens-release button while turning the lens away from the lens-release button.**

   You should feel the lens release from the mount at this point. Lift the lens off the mount to remove it.

4. **Place the rear protective cap onto the back of the lens.**

   If you aren't putting another lens on the camera, cover the lens mount with the protective cap that came with your camera, too.

Using an IS (image stabilizer) lens

The 18–55mm lens sold with the Rebel T1i/500D camera offers *image stabilization.* On Canon lenses, this feature is indicated by the initials *IS* in the lens name.

Image stabilization attempts to compensate for small amounts of camera shake that are common when photographers handhold their cameras and use a slow shutter speed, a lens with a long focal length, or both. Camera shake is a problem because it can result in blurry images, even when your focus is dead-on. Although image stabilization can't work miracles, it does enable most people to capture sharper handheld shots in many situations than they otherwise could.

However, when you use a tripod, image stabilization can have detrimental effects because the system may try to adjust for movement that isn't actually occurring. Although this problem shouldn't be an issue with most Canon IS lenses, if you do see blurry images while using a tripod, try setting the Stabilizer switch (shown in Figure 1-3) to Off. You also can save battery power by turning off image stabilization when you use a tripod.

Figure 1-3: Set the focusing switch to MF before turning the manual focus ring.

If you use a non-Canon lens, the image stabilization feature may go by another name: *anti-shake, vibration compensation,* and so on. In some cases, the manufacturers may recommend that you leave the system turned on or select a special setting when you use a tripod, so be sure to check the lens manual for information.

Whatever type of lens you use, note that image stabilization isn't meant to eliminate the blur that can occur when your subject moves during the exposure. That problem is related to shutter speed, a topic you can explore in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 offers more tips for blur-free shots and explains focal length and its effect on your pictures.

Shifting from autofocus to manual focus

Like any modern camera, yours offers autofocusing capabilities. Your Rebel T1i/500D offers an excellent autofocusing system, which you can find out how to exploit to its best advantage in Chapter 6. With some subjects, however, autofocusing can be slow or impossible, which is why your camera also offers manual focusing.

You make the shift from auto to manual focus as follows:

1. **Locate the AF/MF switch on the side of the lens.**

   This switch sets the focus operation to either auto (AF) or manual (MF). Figure 1-3 shows you the switch as it appears on the Rebel T1i/500D kit lens. The switch should be in a similar location on other Canon lenses. If you use a lens from another manufacturer, check the lens instruction manual.

2. **Set the switch to the MF position, as shown in the figure.**

3. **Look through the viewfinder and twist the focusing ring until your subject comes into focus.**

   On the kit lens, the focusing ring is at the far end of the lens barrel, as indicated in Figure 1-3. If you use another lens, the focusing ring may be located elsewhere, so check your lens manual.

   If you have trouble focusing, you may be too close to your subject; every lens has a minimum focusing distance. (For the kit lens, the minimum close-focus range is about 10 inches; for other lenses, check the specifications in the lens manual.) You also may need to adjust the viewfinder to accommodate your eyesight; see the next section for details.