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# Nikon® D5300™

FOR

# DUMMIES®

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- Use automatic shooting modes or move up to manual control
- Get creative with exposure, color, focus, and special effects

**IN FULL COLOR!**

**Julie Adair King**

*Bestselling author of Digital Photography  
For Dummies®*



***Nikon® D5300™***

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**by Julie Adair King**

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## **Nikon® D5300™ For Dummies®**

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# Nikon® D5300™ For Dummies®

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# Introduction

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*Nikon.* The name has been associated with top-flight photography equipment for generations. And the introduction of the D5300 has only enriched Nikon's well-deserved reputation, offering all the control that a diehard photography enthusiast could want while providing easy-to-use, point-and-shoot features for the beginner.

In fact, the D5300 offers so *many* features that sorting them all out can be more than a little confusing, 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 about all the other techie terms you encounter in your camera manual — *resolution, aperture, white balance*, 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.

Therein lies the point of *Nikon D5300 For Dummies*. Throughout 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 Nikon picture-taking powerhouse.

# *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've 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.

Here's a brief preview of what you can find in each part of the book:

- ✓ **Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps:** Part I contains two chapters to help you get up and running. Chapter [1](#) guides you through initial camera setup, shows you how to view and adjust camera settings, and walks you through the steps of taking your first pictures using the Auto exposure mode. Chapter [2](#) introduces you to other exposure modes and also explains basic picture options such as Flash mode, Shutter Release mode, Image Size (resolution), and Image Quality (JPEG or Raw).
- ✓ **Part II: Taking Creative Control:** Chapters in this part help you unleash the full creative power of your camera by detailing the advanced shooting modes (P, S, A, and M). Chapter [3](#) covers the critical topic of exposure; Chapter [4](#) explains how to manipulate focus; and Chapter [5](#) discusses color controls. Chapter [6](#) summarizes techniques explained in earlier chapters, providing a quick-reference guide to the camera settings and shooting strategies that produce the best results for portraits, action shots, landscape scenes,

and close-ups. Chapter [7](#) shifts gears, moving from still photography to HD movie recording with your D5300.

- ✓ **Part [III](#): After the Shot:** This part offers two chapters, both dedicated to tasks you do after you press the shutter button. Chapter [8](#) explains how to review your pictures on the camera monitor, create an in-camera slide show, and connect your camera to a TV for large-screen playback. Chapter [9](#) topics include rating, deleting, and protecting photos, downloading images to your computer or to a tablet or smartphone, processing Raw files, and preparing pictures for online sharing.
- ✓ **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](#) covers the photo-editing and effects tools found on the camera's Retouch menu and also shows you how to use the Effects exposure mode to add special effects to movies and photos as you record them. Chapter [11](#) wraps up the book by detailing some camera features that, although not found on most “Top Ten Reasons I Bought My Nikon D5300” 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:



The Tip icon flags information that will save you time, effort, money, or some other valuable resource, including your sanity. Tips also point out techniques that help you get the best results from specific camera features.



When you see this icon, look alive. It indicates a potential danger zone that can result in much wailing and teeth-gnashing if ignored. In other words, this is stuff that you really don't want to learn the hard way.



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.



I apply this icon either to introduce information that is 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 another pressing fact.

Additionally, I need to point out these extra details that will help you use this book effectively:

✓ **Other margin art:** Replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen symbols also appear in the margins of some paragraphs. I include these to provide a quick reminder of the appearance of the button or feature 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⇒Convert Files,” click the File menu to unfurl it and then click the Convert Files command on the menu.

## ***eCheat Sheet***

For a little bonus, you can find an electronic version of the famous *For Dummies* eCheat Sheet at [www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/nikond5300](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/nikond5300). The eCheat Sheet contains a quick-reference guide to all the buttons, dials, switches, and exposure modes on your camera. Log on, print it out, and tuck it in your camera bag for times when you don't want to carry this book with you.

## ***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 mind-boggling at first. So take it slowly, experimenting with just one or two new camera settings or techniques at first. Then, every 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 D5300 is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and I thank you for allowing me, through this book, to serve as your tour guide.



Occasionally, Wiley's technology books are updated. If this book has technical updates, they'll be posted at [www.dummies.com/go/nikond5300updates](http://www.dummies.com/go/nikond5300updates).

## Part I

# Fast Track to Super Snaps



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## *In this part ...*

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the basics of using your camera, from attaching lenses to navigating menus.
- ✓ Find step-by-step instructions for point-and-shoot photography in Auto mode.
- ✓ Try out Live View shooting and customize the Live View display.
- ✓ Find out how to select the shutter-release mode, exposure mode, Image Size (picture resolution), and Image Quality (file type, JPEG or Raw).
- ✓ Discover options available for flash photography in different exposure modes.





# Chapter 1

## Getting Up and Running

---

### ***In This Chapter***

- ▶ Preparing the camera for its first outing
  - ▶ Getting acquainted with camera features
  - ▶ Viewing and adjusting camera settings
  - ▶ Setting a few basic preferences
  - ▶ Returning your camera to its original state
  - ▶ Taking a picture in Auto mode
- 

Shooting for the first time with a camera as sophisticated as the Nikon D5300 can produce a blend of excitement and anxiety. On one hand, you can't wait to start using your new equipment, but on the other, you're a little intimidated by all its buttons, dials, and menu options.

Well, fear not: This chapter provides the information you need to start getting comfortable with your D5300. The first section walks you through initial camera setup; following that, you can get an overview of camera controls, discover how to view and adjust camera settings, and get my take on some basic setup options. At the end of the chapter, I walk you step-by-step through taking your first pictures using Auto mode, which offers point-and-shoot simplicity until you're ready to step up to more advanced options.

# *Preparing the Camera for Initial Use*

After unpacking your camera, you have to assemble a few parts. In addition to the camera body and the supplied battery (be sure to charge it before the first use), you need a lens and a memory card. Later sections in this chapter provide details about working with lenses and memory cards, but here's what you need to know up front:

- ✓ **Lens:** You can mount a wide range of lenses on your D5300, but some aren't compatible with all camera features. For example, to enjoy autofocus, you need an AF-S or AF-I lens. Your camera manual offers details about lens compatibility.



The *AF* in AF-S stands for *autofocus*, and the *S* stands for *silent wave*, a Nikon autofocus technology. AF-I lenses are older, professional-grade (expensive) lenses that are no longer made but may be available on the secondhand market.

If you don't yet own a lens, the website for this book offers a short buying guide. Go to [www.dummies.com/extras/nikon](http://www.dummies.com/extras/nikon).

- ✓ **SD (Secure Digital) memory card:** Your camera accepts only this type of card. Most SD cards carry the designation SDHC (for *High Capacity*) or SDXC (for *eXtended Capacity*), depending on how many gigabytes (GB) of data they hold. SDHC cards hold

from 4GB to 32GB of data; the SDXC moniker is assigned to cards with capacities greater than 32GB.

Cards are also assigned a speed rating from 2 to 10, with a higher number indicating a faster data-transfer rate. The industry recently added a new speed rating: Ultra High Speed (UHS). UHS cards also carry a number designation; at present, there is only one class of UHS card — UHS 1. These cards currently are the fastest the planet has to offer. Of course, a faster card means a more expensive card. But to maximize your camera's performance, I recommend Class 10 or UHS 1 cards.



A faster card translates to smoother movie recording and playback and also can improve performance when you're shooting a burst of images using the camera's continuous capture feature.

With camera, lens, battery, and card within reach, take these steps:

1. **Turn the camera off.**
2. **Install the battery into the compartment on the bottom of the camera.**
3. **Attach a lens.**

First, remove the caps that cover the front of the camera and the back of the lens. Then align the *mounting index* (white dot) on the lens with the one on the camera body, as shown in Figure [1-1](#). After placing the lens on the camera mount, rotate the lens toward the shutter-button side of the camera. You should feel a solid click as the lens locks into place.



**Figure 1-1:** Align the white dot on the lens with the one on the camera body.

#### 4. **Insert a memory card.**

Open the card-slot cover on the right side of the camera and orient the card as shown in Figure [1-2](#) (the label faces the back of the camera). Push the card gently into the slot and close the cover. The memory-card access light, labeled in the figure, illuminates briefly to let you know that the camera recognizes the card.



Memory-card access light  
Multi Selector and OK button

**Figure 1-2:** Insert the memory card with the label facing the back of the camera.

## 5. **Rotate the monitor to the desired viewing position.**

When you first take the camera out of its box, the monitor is positioned with the screen facing inward, protecting it from scratches and smudges. Use your fingertip to gently lift the right side of the monitor up and away from the camera back. You can then rotate the monitor to move it into the traditional position on the camera back, as shown on the left in [Figure 1-3](#), or swing the monitor out and away from the camera and adjust it to find the best viewing angle, as shown on the right.



**Figure 1-3:** Here are just two of the possible monitor positions.

## 6. Turn the camera on.

The chances are slim, but you may see a message on the monitor telling you to format the memory card. Continue with these setup steps and then skip to the section “[Working with memory cards](#)” to find out about formatting.

## 7. Adjust the viewfinder to your eyesight.

Tucked behind the right side of the rubber eyepiece that surrounds the viewfinder is a *diopter adjustment* dial that enables you to adjust the viewfinder focus to accommodate your eyesight. I highlighted the dial in [Figure 1-4](#).

To take this step, remove the lens cap, look through the viewfinder, and press the shutter button halfway to display data at the bottom of the viewfinder. (In dim lighting, the flash may pop up; ignore it for now and close the unit after you adjust the viewfinder.) Now rotate the dial until the data appears sharpest. The markings in the center of the viewfinder, which relate to autofocus, also become more or less sharp.



**Figure 1-4:** Rotate this dial to set the viewfinder focus for your eyesight.

## 8. **Set the camera language, time zone, date, and time.**

When you power up the camera for the first time, the monitor displays a message asking you to select the menu language and set the time zone, date, and time. Navigate the screens and adjust the settings by using the Multi Selector and the OK button (refer to [Figure 1-2](#)):

- Press the edge of the Multi Selector up and down to scroll the screen vertically; press right/left to travel horizontally.
- After making your selections, press OK to finalize things.

(The later section “[Ordering from camera menus](#)” provides more help with using menus.)

The date/time information is included as *metadata* (hidden data) in the picture file. You can view metadata in some playback display modes (see [Chapter 8](#)) and in certain photo programs, including Nikon ViewNX 2 (refer to [Chapter 9](#)).

That's all there is to it — the camera is now ready to go. From here, my recommendation is that you keep reading this chapter to familiarize yourself with the main camera features and basic operation. But if you're anxious to take a picture right away, I won't think any less of you if you skip to the very last section of the chapter, which guides you through the process. Just promise that at some point, you'll read the pages in between, because they actually do contain important information.

## ***Exploring Basic Camera Features***

If you're new to dSLR photography, some aspects of using your camera, such as working with the lens, may be unfamiliar to you. But even if you're an old pro — check that, even if you're a *seasoned* pro — it pays to take some time before your first shoot with a new camera to get familiar with its controls. To that end, the upcoming pages provide a quick overview of the D5300's main features and also offer a primer on working with lenses and memory cards.


### ***Exploring external camera controls***

Scattered across your camera's exterior are numerous controls that you use to change picture-taking settings, review your photos, and perform various other operations. In later chapters, I discuss all your camera's functions in detail and provide the exact steps to follow to access them. This section provides just a basic “what's this thing do?” guide to each control. (Don't worry about memorizing the button names; throughout the book, I show pictures of buttons in the page margins to help you know exactly which one to press.)




## ***Topside controls***

Your virtual tour begins with the bird's-eye view shown in Figure [1-5](#). There are a number of features of note here:

- ✓ **On/Off switch and shutter button:** Okay, I'm pretty sure you've already figured out this combo button. But you may not be aware that you need to press the shutter button in two stages: Press and hold the button halfway and wait for the camera to initiate exposure metering and, if you're using autofocus, to set the focusing distance. Then press the button the rest of the way to take the picture.
- ✓  **Exposure Compensation button:** This button activates Exposure Compensation, a feature that enables you to tweak exposure when working in the P (programmed autoexposure), A (aperture-priority autoexposure), or S (shutter-priority autoexposure) modes. (I cover this feature in Chapter [3](#).) Press the button while rotating the Command dial (in back of the camera; see Figure [1-6](#), in the next section) to set the amount of Exposure Compensation. In M (manual exposure) mode, press this button while rotating the Command dial to adjust the aperture setting.



**Figure 1-5:** Rotate the Live View switch to shift from viewfinder to Live View photography.

- ✓  **Info button:** Press this button to display the Information screen on the camera monitor. The screen enables you to not only view current picture settings but also adjust some settings more quickly than by using the camera menus. (Look for details later in this chapter, in the section “[Adjusting settings via the Information display control strip](#)”). To turn off the screen, press the Info button again.



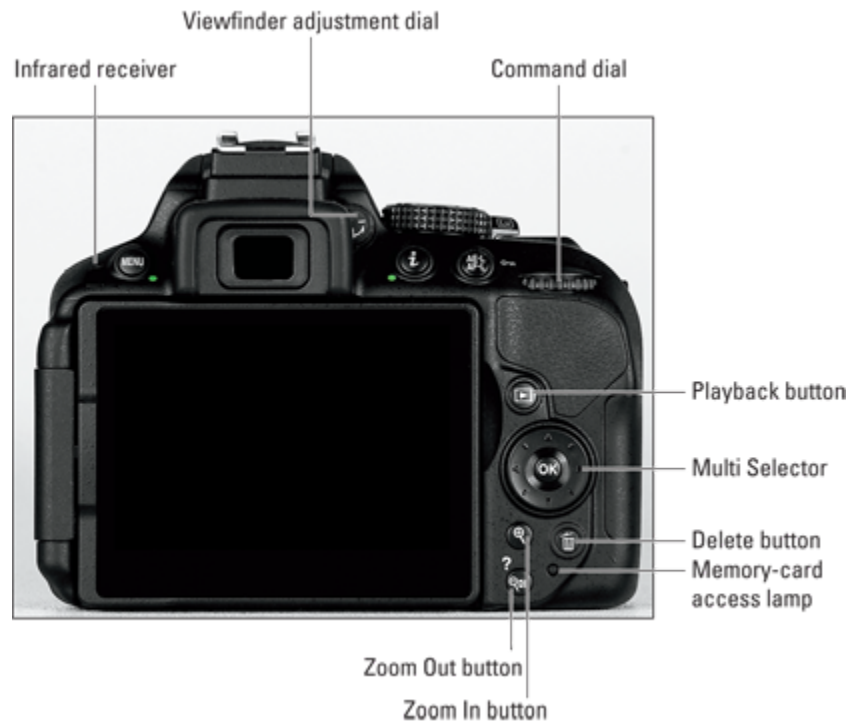
You also can display the screen by pressing the shutter button halfway and releasing it.

- ✓ **Live View switch:** As its name implies, this switch turns Live View on and off. In Live View mode, the scene in front of the lens appears on the monitor, and you can't see anything through the viewfinder. You then can compose a still photo using the monitor or

begin recording a movie. The last section of this chapter introduces you to Live View photography; see Chapter [7](#) for help with movie making.



To the right of the switch, you see symbols representing the GPS (Global Satellite Positioning) and Wi-Fi features. These labels are decorative only; rotating the Live View switch doesn't have any impact on either feature. Instead, you control them both via the Setup menu. Chapter [11](#) details the GPS feature; Chapter [9](#), the Wi-Fi feature.



**Figure 1-6:** Use the Multi Selector to navigate menus and access certain other camera options.



**Movie-record button:** After shifting to Live View mode, press this button to start recording a movie. Press again to stop recording.

- ✓ **Mode dial:** With this dial, you set the camera to fully automatic, semiautomatic, or manual exposure mode. Setting the dial to Effects enables you to apply special effects as the image or movie is captured. Chapter [2](#) introduces you to each exposure mode.
- ✓ **AF-assist lamp:** When you use autofocus, the camera may emit a beam of light from this lamp in dim lighting; the light helps the camera find its focus target. The lamp also lights when you use red-eye reduction flash and the Self-Timer shutter-release mode, both covered in Chapter [2](#).
- ✓ **Flash hot shoe:** A *hot shoe* is a connection for attaching an external flash head. When not in use, the contacts on the shoe are protected by a black cover; remove the cover to expose the contacts (refer to Figure [1-5](#)) to attach the external flash.
- ✓ **Microphone:** The holes labeled *microphone* in the figure lead to the camera's internal microphone.



- ✓ **Speaker:** When you play a movie, the sound comes wafting out of these holes (refer to Figure [1-5](#)).
- ✓ **Focal plane indicator:** When you need to know the exact distance between your subject and the camera, the focal plane mark (refer to Figure [1-5](#)) is the key. The mark indicates the plane at which light coming through the lens is focused onto the camera's image sensor. Basing your measurement on this mark produces a more accurate camera-to-subject distance than using the end of the lens or another external point on the camera body as your reference point.

## ***Back-of-the-body controls***