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Julie Adair King

*Bestselling author of Digital Photography
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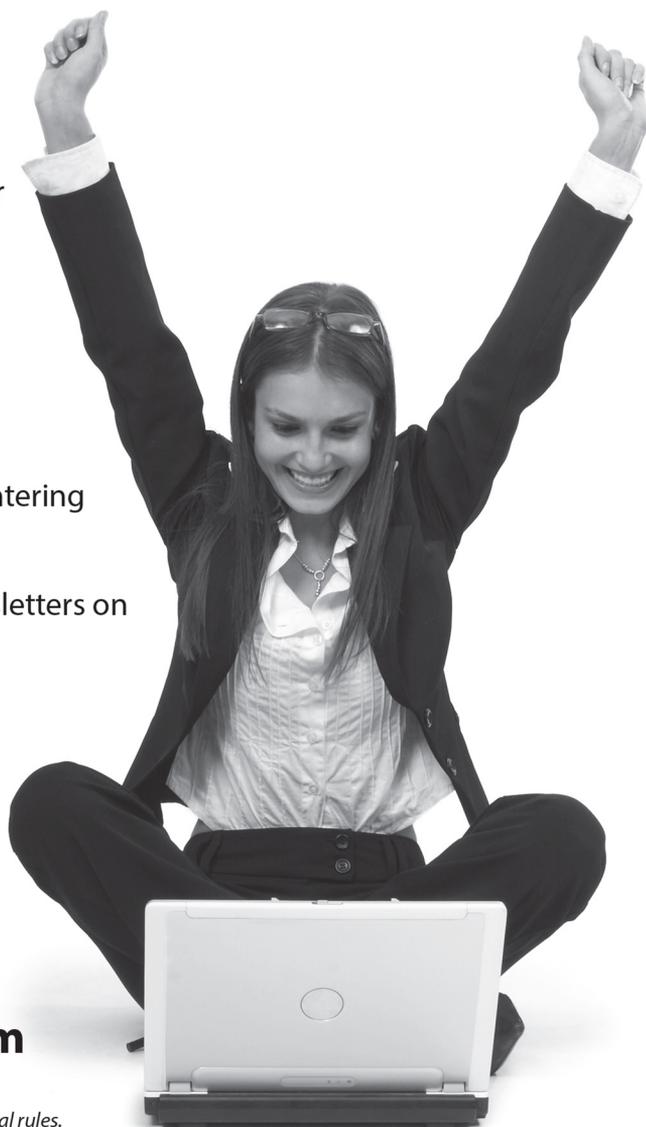
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Nikon® D5300™ For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2013957978

ISBN 978-1-118-87214-7 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-118-87218-5 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-87254-3 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Nikon D5300 For Dummies ---

Introduction

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 or digital imaging 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. 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.

Part I

Fast Track to Super Snaps

getting started
with your

Nikon

D5300

D2300



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A photograph of two white herons with long, yellowish beaks, facing each other in a nest. The herons have white feathers and a dark cap on their heads. They are perched on a nest made of sticks and twigs, with green leaves visible in the background. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be overlaid.

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.

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.

- ✓ **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.

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.



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.



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.

Rotate dial to adjust viewfinder focus



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.



- ✓ **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

On the back of the camera, shown in Figure 1-6, you find these features:



- ✓ **Infrared receiver:** Labeled in Figure 1-6, this is one of two receivers that picks up the infrared signal from the optional ML-L3 wireless remote control. The other receiver is on the front-right side of the camera, near the middle of the hand grip.
- ✓ **Menu button:** Press this button to access menus of camera options. See “Ordering from camera menus,” later in this chapter, for details.
- ✓ **Viewfinder adjustment dial:** Rotate this dial to adjust the viewfinder focus to your eyesight; see the first section of this chapter for details.
- ✓ **i button:** Pressing this button activates the control strip at the bottom of the Information display, enabling quick access to certain picture settings. Use the Multi Selector to highlight an option and press OK to display a screen that offers the settings for that option. Press the *i* button again to exit the control strip.



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



✓ **Command dial:** After you activate certain camera features, you rotate this dial to select a setting. For example, to choose a shutter speed when shooting in shutter-priority (S) mode, you rotate the Command dial.

✓ **AE-L/AF-L button:** Pressing this button initiates autoexposure lock (AE-L) and autofocus lock (AF-L). Chapter 3 explains autoexposure lock; Chapter 4 talks about autofocus lock.

In playback mode, pressing the button activates the Protect feature, which locks the picture file — hence the little key symbol that appears above the button — so that it isn't erased if you use the picture-delete functions. See Chapter 9 for details. (The picture *is* erased if you format the memory card, however.)

✓ **Multi Selector/OK button:** This dual-natured control plays a role in many camera functions. You press the outer edges of the Multi Selector left, right, up, or down to navigate camera menus and access certain other options. At the center of the control is the OK button, which you press to finalize a menu selection or another camera adjustment.



In this book, the instruction “Press the Multi Selector left” simply means to press the left edge of the control. “Press the Multi Selector right” means to press the right edge, and so on.



✓ **Playback button:** Press this button to switch the camera into picture review mode. Chapter 8 details playback features.



✓ **Delete button:** Sporting a trash can icon, the universal symbol for delete, this button enables you to erase pictures from your memory card. Chapter 9 explains the steps.



✓ **Zoom In button:** In playback mode, pressing this button magnifies the currently displayed image and also reduces the number of thumbnails displayed at a time. Note the plus sign in the middle of the magnifying glass — plus means enlarge.



✓ **Zoom Out button:** As you can probably deduce from the three symbols that mark this button, it has not one, but *three* primary functions:

- *Display help screens:* The little question mark symbol above the button is a reminder that you can press this button to display helpful information about certain menu options. See the sidebar “Displaying Help screens,” later in this chapter, for details.
- *Display thumbnails during playback:* In playback mode, pressing the button enables you to display multiple image thumbnails on the screen; thus the little thumbnail grid on the button face.
- *Reduce image magnification during playback:* If you magnify an image during playback, pressing the button reduces the magnification amount. The magnifying glass with the minus sign tips you off to this function.

Front-left features

The front-left side of the camera, shown in Figure 1-7, sports these features:



✓ **Flash button:** In the advanced exposure modes (P, S, A, and M), as well as in Food Scene mode, pressing this button raises the built-in flash. (In other modes, the camera decides whether the flash is needed.) By holding the button down and rotating the Command dial, you can adjust the Flash mode (fill flash, red-eye reduction, and so on). In advanced exposure modes, you also can adjust the flash power by pressing the button while simultaneously pressing the Exposure Compensation button and rotating the Command dial. The little plus/minus symbol that appears below the button — the same symbol that’s on the Exposure Compensation button — is a reminder of the button’s role in flash-power adjustment.

Check out Chapter 2 for details on flash options.



✓ **Function (Fn) button:** By default, this button gives you quick access to the ISO setting, which controls the camera's sensitivity to light. (Chapter 3 explains.) If you don't adjust that setting often, you can use the button to perform a variety of other operations. Chapter 11 shows you how to change the button's purpose. (**Note:** All instructions in this book assume that you haven't changed the function.)

✓ **Lens-release button:** Press this button to disengage the lens from the camera's lens mount so that you can remove the lens.



✓ **Release Mode button:** Press this button to display a screen where you can select the shutter-release mode. By default, the option is set to Single Frame, which results in one picture each time you press the shutter button. You can explore other options in Chapter 2.

Flash button

Function button



Lens-release button

Release Mode button

Figure 1-7: Press the Flash button to use the built-in flash in P, S, A, or M mode.

Hidden connections

Hidden under cover on the left side of the camera are the following connection ports, labeled in Figure 1-8:

- ✓ **Microphone jack:** If you're not happy with the audio quality provided by the internal microphone, you can plug in the optional ME-1 stereo microphone here.
- ✓ **USB and A/V port:** Through this port, you can connect your camera to your computer via USB connection for picture downloading. The same port enables you to connect the camera to a television via an A/V cable for picture playback. Nikon supplies the cables you need for both connections in the camera box; see Chapter 8 for information on television connections and Chapter 9 for help with downloading pictures.
- ✓ **Accessory terminal:** This terminal accepts the following accessories: Nikon MC-DC2 remote shutter-release cable; WR-1 and WR-R10 wireless remote controllers; and GP-1/GP-1A GPS units. I don't cover these optional accessories, but the manual that comes with each device can get you up and running.



Figure 1-8: Open the cover on the side of the camera to reveal these connections.



You can't connect a wireless remote controller while the ME-1 stereo microphone is attached.

- ✓ **HDMI port:** You can use this port to connect your camera to a high-definition TV, but you need to buy an HDMI cable to do so. Look for a Type C mini-pin cable. Chapter 8 offers details on television playback.

If you turn the camera over, you find a tripod socket, which enables you to mount the camera on a tripod that uses a ¼-inch screw, plus the battery chamber.

Ordering from camera menus



When you press the Menu button, you see a screen similar to the one shown on the left in Figure 1-9. The icons along the left side of the screen represent the available menus, each of which is loaded with shooting, playback, and customization settings; Table 1-1 offers an icon decoder ring. On the menu screens, the icon that's highlighted is the active menu; options on that menu automatically appear to the right. In the figure, the Shooting menu is active, for example.



Figure 1-9: Highlight a menu in the left column to display its contents.

Table 1-1		D5300 Menus	
Symbol	Open This Menu . . .	To Access These Functions	
	Playback	Viewing, deleting, and protecting pictures	
	Shooting	Basic photography settings	
	Custom Setting	Advanced photography options and some basic camera operations	
	Setup	Additional basic camera operations	
	Retouch	Photo and movie editing options	
 	My Menu/Recent Settings	Your custom menu or 20 most recently used menu options	