



DSLR Buyers Guide

So, you have decided to buy a DSLR digital camera instead of a top end digital compact camera? There are many factors you now need to consider before buying your camera. For example; Canon Vs Nikon, how many mega pixels, kit lens or better etc... the list goes on!

Hopefully this handy guide will help to answer some of those questions for you;

Make of camera:

This is a tough one, as to look at the two market leaders, Canon and Nikon, of DSLR cameras there is not a lot to separate either. For many years Canon has been regarded as a high end professional camera manufacturer and has dominated sports photographers as well as photo journalist's camera bags.

Canon has recently revamped its entry level DSLR cameras with many new additions; Canon 350D, Canon 400D and the Canon 450D.

Nikon have recently released new entry level DSLR cameras such as the Nikon D80, Nikon D40 and the Nikon D40X.

Mega pixels:

In basic terms the quality of an image has nothing to do with the mega pixel count. The quality of an image is mostly related to the digital sensor that captures the light.

The amount of mega pixels a DSLR camera has, has an impact on how big you would like to print out your images. The higher the count, the bigger you can potentially print out an image.

Manual controls:

Nearly all DSLR cameras come with full manual controls. This enables you to control shutter speed, ISO setting, white balance, auto-focus (or) manual focus, metering, lens aperture and multiple set programmes.

The above are all basic manual controls that should be found on all DSLR cameras.

Memory cards:

If you are moving up from a digital compact camera you may already have a large collection of memory cards that you are hoping to use with your new DSLR. Not all cameras take the same type of memory cards though.

Canon cameras mainly take **Compact Flash** cards with newer cameras starting to accept **Secure Digital** cards. While Nikon take a variety of **Secure Digital** cards, **Compact Flash** cards and **Microdrive** cards.



DSLR Buyers Guide

Kit lens quality:

Another huge factor in the quality of your photographs is the lens that is used. Most DSLR's come with a lens known as a kit lens. A kit lens tends to be very low quality with cheap glass and components. It is normally possible to buy a DSLR camera with a better quality lens as a bundle for a very good price. If your budget can stretch this far then it is highly recommended that you do so, the difference in quality can be very noticeable.

Extras:

In the box you can expect some nice extras;

- Camera body
- Lens (if applicable)
- USB cable (to transfer images)
- Disc (software to transfer images, RAW converter and image management)
- Manual
- Warranty
- Memory card (some cameras come with a memory card, usually a 512MB card)

Holding the camera:

It is essential to hold the camera before parting with any money! When holding the camera you will be able to see how easy it is to get the shutter button to take a photo, or check if the LCD is bright enough for you. Those are only two of many things you should check.

High street or online:

This comes down to personal preference, and if you would like to hold the camera before you buy.

Most decent camera shops will let you hold the camera and even take photos beforehand. I like to grill the sales assistant as well, firstly it'll make him feel that he has earned his commission, and secondly they can clear up any questions or doubts you may have. If they stumble or don't know the answer to any of your questions, ask them to find out. Don't forget it's a lot of money that you will be spending with them so make sure you are going to be 100% happy with your camera.

Online does tend to be cheaper, but you don't get the chance to hold the camera and take some sample images. This is very important.

Price:

A new DSLR is not cheap; expect to pay in the region of £500 - £600 for a decent entry level camera. Top of the range tends to be £6,000 for the Canon EOS 1Ds MK3.