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Nikon Coolpix S4 Digital Camera Preview

Friday 28th October 2005

Introduction

The Nikon Coolpix S4 is one of the Coolpix cameras [Nikon](#) introduced just before the [IFA 2005](#) kicked off. The concept of the Nikon S4 is rather familiar. The adjustable lens is also found on the Coolpix 4500 and 995 digital cameras. At the time this already was a successful concept also because of the extensive possibilities these cameras had to offer. In fact many photographers considered the before mentioned cameras to be attractive second cameras. Despite the look-alike design of the Nikon Coolpix S4 compared with its predecessors, the target group seems to have changed. My estimation is that the target group has definitely grown because of the fact that the S4 camera is more of an entry-level model with attractive specifications than a versatile camera with emphasis on this versatility. Huge alterations can be found on the lens offering a wide optical range with 10x optical zoom and besides that the appearance of the 6 Megapixel CCD with the software solution that is lately more often used by Nikon. We had a brief chance to look into the S4 digital camera. It concerned a pre-production model so for the time being we can offer you an extensive preview. The Nikon Coolpix S4 preview gives you an overview of the

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Written by Dennis Hissink



possibilities and shows the camera from all sides.

Nikon Coolpix S4 with 10x optical zoom and tilting lens

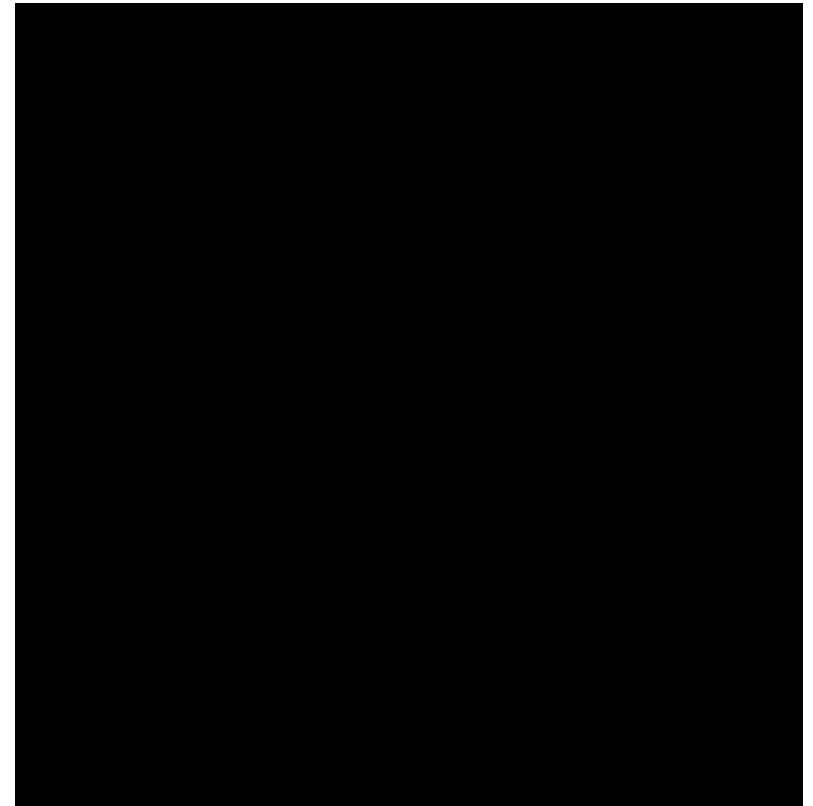
Nikon S4 Storage medium



Nikon Coolpix S4 Storage medium

It's impossible to imagine there was a time without the existence of a Secure Digital memory card once. Moreover the Nikon S4 uses this type of memory card. Besides that the S4 digital camera is equipped with an internal memory of approximately 13.5MB. If no memory card is inserted, pictures will be stored on the internal memory of the camera, rendered in and deleted from the memory of the camera. In case there is an SD card in use, it will get priority. When using an SD card, formatting will only concern the inserted memory card, not the internal memory. The SD card has to be removed before the internal memory can be formatted or used for storing, deleting or viewing images. During the preview I used the SanDisk Ultra II Plus SD memory card. This clever card can be 'broken' in the middle after which a USB interface is freed.

Nikon S4 Batteries



Nikon Coolpix S4 Batteries

To prevent the camera from pushing up daisies, two AA size batteries are necessary. The camera is standard delivered with two AA alkaline batteries or two AA NiMH batteries with charger. It depends on the country or the area the S4 is sold in. Concerning the delivery of the rechargeable batteries, obviously they have to be charged before using them. It takes the Nikon MH-71 charger, which comes with the camera, approximately two and a half hours to recharge two NiMH batteries. The indicator on the charger will blink during recharge and will turn off when the batteries are fully loaded. The bottom of the Nikon S4 contains the battery compartment. A firm cover keeps the compartment locked. Sliding the cover to the required direction will open the compartment and allows you to insert two AA format batteries. Besides supporting NiMH batteries

The SD Plus card enables you to insert it in a free USB port directly from the Nikon Coolpix S4 without the need for cables or a card reader. Of course you may also connect the camera with a USB cable and transfer files in that manner.

the Coolpix S4 is also supporting Alkaline and Lithium batteries. Strangely enough you have to select the choice of batteries in the menu of the camera in order to ensure the correct battery indicator rendering of the battery level. If you plan to use the camera for a long duration of time on a fixed location you might want to consider purchasing the optional Nikon EH-62B A/C power adapter.

Main switch



Nikon Coolpix S4 Main switch

On top of the camera the main switch is placed. It serves for setting the Nikon S4 digital camera to play and/or record images or record video clips. Next to the switch a tiny little LED is placed that is able to indicate the following: it is lit continuously when the camera is activated, it flashes in the stand-by mode, it blinks when the batteries are empty and it extinguishes when the camera is turned off. The on/off switch is positioned next to the main switch.

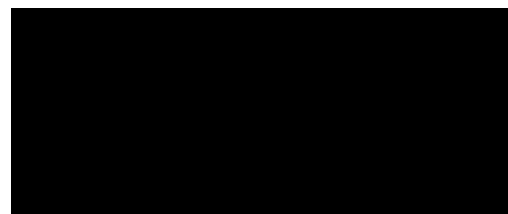
Tilting lens



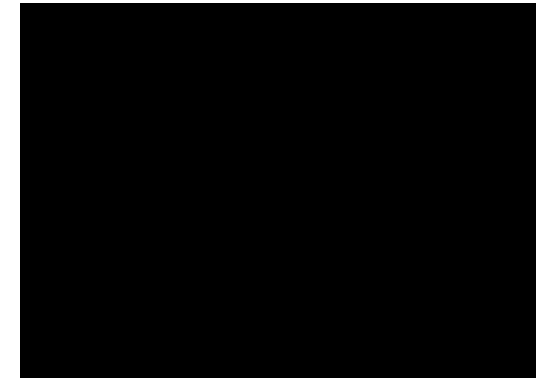
Nikon Coolpix S4 Tilting lens

The unique tilting lens can be turned 180° forward from stored position (0°) or 90° towards the user. This way it's rather easy to make a self-portrait or capture a subject from a most difficult position. The rendering on the monitor is reflected as if looking into a mirror the moment the lens is turned towards the user. This concept is an old acquaintance and the Nikon connoisseur will recognise it from former models like the Nikon Coolpix 4500, 950 and previous models. The main difference with the tilting lens is the huge leap forward concerning the range; from a 4x optical zoom to 10x!

Macro / Close-up



AF-assist lamp



Nikon Coolpix S4 AF-assist lamp

In case of insufficient environmental light or when a subject is captured under bad light circumstances the AF-assist lamp will be activated automatically. Pointing and pressing the shutter release half-way down will bring out a bright light to support the auto focus of the camera. This assist lamp has a maximum range of 2 meters. The AF-assist lamp will not be activated when AF-assist lamp OFF is selected in the menu or when the camera is photographing in certain shooting modes like twilight, night landscape etc. Standard the AF-assist light is automatically switched on.

Flash built-in flash

Editor's comment:





Nikon S4 Built-in flash

The S4 digital camera contains a small built-in flash right next to the lens. The camera features various flash settings like: auto, auto with red-eye-reduction, flash off, fill in flash and flash with slow shutter speeds. Concerning the red eyes and the flash positioned right next to the lens: the Coolpix S4 offers an advanced red-eye-correction. The camera checks the images for red eyes. In case of detecting them the photo is edited to diminish the effect of red eyes. ("In-Camera Red-Eye Fix"). It will take a little extra time to store the photo.



Nikon S4 Macro / Close-up

The Nikon S4 camera features a special macro / close-up mode. Nikon cameras are already known for an excellent macro function since ancient times. This mode is used to capture subjects on a very close distance, up to 4cm. The tilting lens is very functional for making certain close-up images. In macro / close-up mode the S4 camera will focus continuously, even when the release button is not pushed half-way down. The internal flash needs a minimum distance of 40cm for evenly exposing images.

"The Nikon S4 pleases me tremendously. The practical concept of the tilting lens that Nikon scored with on the Coolpix 4500 and 995, is familiar and trusty. It offers every possibility to shoot from any imaginable position. The optical range from 38-380mm (equivalent of a 35mm camera) covers a huge area offered by a rather compact size camera. As far as operation and possibilities are concerned, the Nikon Coolpix S4 is a lot alike the other Nikon cameras that were introduced. The menu is neatly arranged and is easy to navigate. The pre-programmed scenes are well-known but the combination of scenes and composing-assistant; "In Camera Red Eye removal" and Face Priority AF are strong trumps that lift the Coolpix S4 camera to a higher level of user friendliness. The large size LCD monitor (2.5 inch) offers excellent rendering and is a good replacement for the ever too small optical viewfinder.."

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