

Photographing Daffodils

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Make the most of the quintessential spring flower by getting up close and personal. And, with daffodils everywhere at the moment, you should easily be able to find a perfect specimen.

- Overcast days are perfect for punchy daffodil pictures, diffusing the light for superior colour saturation and not causing the harsh shadows and bleaching you can get with bright sunlight – and, let's face it, you're more likely to get cloud than sun in a typical British spring! A carefully placed reflector is ideal for bouncing light into any shaded areas (pop-up reflectors are handy, or make your own from a sheet of aluminium foil or white/gold card).
- If you're using a NIKKOR zoom with close-up capability, zoom out to the telephoto end of the focal length range and compose your image. Be aware of the lens's closest focusing distance of the lens you're using; if you're closer to your subject than that limit allows, you won't be able to get a sharp picture. For the ultimate in close-focusing capability, use a Micro-NIKKOR 60mm, 105mm or 200mm lens, which are all designed specifically for close-up

photography.

- Great flower shots are all about minimising movement, so preferably shoot with the camera tripod-mounted and use a cable release. (If you're using a NIKKOR VR (vibration reduction) lens, remember to switch off VR. If you have to handhold, ensure VR is switched on and use a fast shutter speed e.g. 1/200sec. Choosing a windless day is obviously helpful, as even the most gentle of breezes can disturb delicate petals. Create a DIY 'windbreak' with your reflector card, or use a 'plamp' – just attach one end to the tripod and the other to the daff's stem to reduce the risk of movement.
- Think about your shooting angle. Shoot slightly to the side of the daff to include lots of 'edgy' detail, or get down on the ground and shoot upwards with the daffodil framed against the sky – remember to use a polariser to boost the colour saturation. You might also need to shoot one stop over the 'correct' exposure to ensure the flower's details are captured (without exposure compensation this angle makes for striking silhouettes).

Quick tips

- If the background is messy or lit similarly to the daffodil, pop a sheet of plain card behind the flower, or throw it beyond focus with a wide aperture/low f-stop (e.g. f/3.5).
- The macro/close-up option from your camera's vari-programs/scene modes menu automatically selects an exposure with a relatively small aperture for enough depth of field to create a striking close-up image against a nicely blurred background.
- With a Nikon 1 camera, shoot with the Close-up Lens Filter N1-CL1 – this reduces the minimum focal length so you can get up close to your daffs for pin-sharp detail against a softy defocused background.
- Use a water spray to create atmospheric 'dewdrops' on the petals and leaves.

For more macro tips, book onto a [Nikon School course](#)