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# Nikon<sup>®</sup> Z fc

for  
**dummies<sup>®</sup>**  
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Nikon<sup>®</sup> Z fc camera

Capture landscapes, portraits,  
and action shots

Control exposure, focus,  
and color like a pro

**Julie Adair King**

Nikon expert and author of  
*Digital Photography For Dummies*





# Nikon® Z fc

**Julie Adair King**

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Nikon® Z fc For Dummies®

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# Introduction

**N**ikon. The name has been associated with top-flight photography equipment for generations, and the Z fc only enriches that reputation, combining cool retro styling with technology that delivers stunning photo and video quality. The Z fc also provides a long list of after-the-shoot features, including tools that enable you to retouch photos right in the camera and upload photos wirelessly to a smart device so that you can instantly share them online. You can even use your smart device as a wireless remote control.

In fact, the Z fc offers so many features that sorting them all out can be more than a little confusing. And therein lies the point of *Nikon Z fc For Dummies*: With the help of this book, you can take full advantage of everything the camera has to offer, even if you're brand new to photography.

## About This Book

Unlike many photography books, this one doesn't require any previous knowledge of photography or digital imaging to make sense of things. In classic *For Dummies* style, everything is explained in easy-to-understand language, with lots of illustrations to help clear up any confusion.

However, even if you have some photography experience — or quite a bit of experience, for that matter — this book has plenty to offer. I provide detailed information about all the camera's exposure, focus, and color controls, explaining not just what each feature does but why and how to put it to best use.

In short, what you have in your hands is the paperback (or ebook) version of an in-depth photography workshop tailored specifically to your Nikon Z fc.

## How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into several 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 made 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 1: Fast Track to Super Snaps:** Part 1 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 and Self-Portrait Shooting modes. Chapter 2 introduces you to other Shooting modes and also explains such critical picture options as Release mode, Image Size (resolution), Image Quality (JPEG or Raw), and Image Area.
- » **Part 2: Beyond the Basics:** Chapters in this part help you unleash the full power of your camera. Chapter 3 provides information that you need to control exposure; Chapter 4 explains how to manipulate focus; and Chapter 5 sorts out color settings. 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, landscapes, and close-ups. Chapter 7 shifts gears, moving from still photography to video recording.
- » **Part 3: After the Shot:** Chapter 8 explains picture playback features, showing you how to adjust the type of data that appears with a picture, how to magnify an image to get a closer look, and how to quickly find and view photos taken on a particular day. Chapter 9 topics include rating, protecting, and deleting photos, downloading files to your computer, processing Raw files, and resizing pictures for online sharing.
- » **Part 4: The Part of Tens:** In famous *For Dummies* tradition, the book concludes with three top-ten lists containing additional bits of information and advice. Chapter 10 details options for customizing your camera, and Chapter 11 covers the tools found on the camera's Retouch menu. Chapter 12 introduces you to ten other features that may come in handy on occasion, such as creating a slide show and adding copyright information to your files.
- » **Appendix: Intro to Nikon SnapBridge:** Nikon SnapBridge is an app that you can install on certain Android and Apple iOS smartphones and tablets. It's this app that enables you to use the camera's wireless functions to connect your Z fc to your smart device. After making the connection, you can transfer photos to the device for viewing or easy uploading to social media sites or online photo-storage sites. You also can use the smart device as a wireless remote control. Check out the appendix for an overview of these features.
- » **Glossary:** If you're new to digital photography or to Nikon, the glossary is a handy reference guide to look up terms you might not be familiar with.

» **Cheat sheet:** When you have a minute or two, visit [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) and enter the name of this book in the search box. You'll find a link to a cheat sheet, which provides a handy reference to your camera's buttons, controls, and Shooting modes.

## 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:



TIP

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.



WARNING

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.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

Lots of information in this book is of a technical nature — digital photography is a technical animal, after all. But when I present a detail that is useful mainly for impressing your tech-savvy friends, I mark it with this icon.



REMEMBER

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, replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen graphics appear in the margins and in some tables. I include these images to provide quick reminders of the appearance of the button or option being discussed.

## Where to Go from Here

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 Z fc is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to act as your tour guide.



# 1

## **Fast Track to Super Snaps**

## **IN THIS PART . . .**

Familiarize yourself with the basics of using your camera, from attaching lenses to navigating menus.

Discover which setup options to adjust and which ones to leave alone.

Get step-by-step help with shooting pictures in Auto mode and Self-Portrait mode.

Choose the right Shooting mode and Release mode for your subject.

Understand how the Image Size (resolution), Image Quality (JPEG or Raw file type), and Image Area settings affect pictures.

- » Preparing the camera for its first outing
- » Becoming acquainted with the touchscreen and other camera features
- » Viewing and adjusting camera settings
- » Setting a few basic preferences
- » Taking a picture in Auto and Self-Portrait Shooting modes

## Chapter **1**

# First Steps, First Shots

**S**hooting for the first time with a camera as sophisticated as the Nikon Z fc 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 dials, buttons, and menu options.

**Fear not:** This chapter provides information to help you become comfortable with your Z fc. The first section walks you through initial camera setup; following that, you can discover how to view and adjust picture settings and get my take on additional setup options. At the end of this chapter, I explain how to take pictures using the Auto and Self-Portrait Shooting modes, which offer point-and-shoot simplicity until you're ready for more advanced options.

# Getting Started

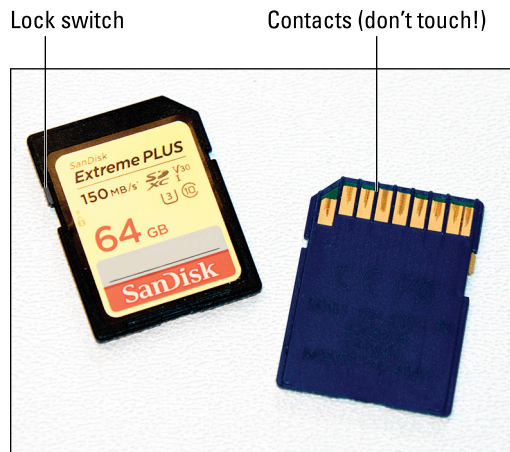
As with any new camera, you need to take a few steps before you can shoot your first picture or video. First, juice up the camera battery using the supplied charger. You also need to check that the lens and memory card you plan to use are compatible with the camera. Here's the score on those components:

- » **Lenses:** The only lenses you can attach directly to the camera are Z-mount lenses. I show the camera in this book with the Nikkor DX 16–50mm Z-mount lens, which is available in a kit with the camera body. However, you may be able to use lenses that have a different mount, such as a Nikon F-mount, by purchasing the Nikon FTZ adapter. See the later section “Exploring a Few Lens Features” for more about the adapter and lenses in general.
- » **SD (Secure Digital) memory card:** You can see an SD card in Figure 1-1. This card comes in a variety of flavors, and the specs can be confusing, so if you need help choosing a card, see the sidebar “Memory cards: How big, how fast?” elsewhere in this chapter. For now, the only rule is that the maximum-capacity card you can use carries the label *SDXC* (Secure Digital eXtended Capacity).



WARNING

When handling an SD card, avoid touching the gold contacts on the back, labeled in Figure 1-1. Also make sure that the lock switch is in the unlocked position, as shown in the figure. When the card is locked, no pictures or other data can be added to it (or deleted from it).



**FIGURE 1-1:** Be sure that the card is unlocked, and avoid touching its gold contacts.

With those prelims out of the way, follow these initial setup steps:

1. **Turn the camera off.**
2. **Install the battery and memory card into their shared compartment, shown in Figure 1-2.**

Push in the battery until the yellow locking switch clicks into place. Orient the card so that the label faces in the direction shown in the figure and then press the bottom of the card down into the slot. Even though the camera is turned off, it lets you know when it recognizes the card, by briefly illuminating the card-access light, labeled in the figure.

To remove the battery, lift the yellow switch to release its hold on the battery. To remove the card, press it down slightly and then let go; the card should pop partially out of the slot, enabling you to grab it.



REMEMBER

3. **Attach a lens.**

Remove the caps that cover the front of the camera and the back of the lens. Then locate the *mounting index* on the camera, labeled in Figure 1-3. (Unlike the mounting index on most Nikon cameras, this one is a black bar rather than a white dot.) Next, look for the mounting index on the lens. On most lenses, the mounting index is a white dot, as is the case with the lens shown in the figure, but it can vary, so consult the lens user guide. Align the lens mounting index with the camera's mounting index and place the lens on the mount. Then rotate the lens toward the shutter-button side of the camera. You should feel a solid click as the lens locks into place.

To dismount a lens so that you can remove it, press the Lens-release button, labeled in Figure 1-3.

If you're using the FTZ adapter to mount a lens, the process is similar, but read the adapter instruction manual for complete instructions on how to attach the adapter to the camera and mount a lens on the adapter.



**FIGURE 1-2:**

The battery and memory card go into the compartment on the bottom of the camera.

#### 4. Adjust the monitor position as desired.

When you first unbox the camera, the monitor is facing inward, protecting it from damage. Open the screen by placing your finger in the notch near the upper right corner of the monitor. Lift the monitor outward and away from the camera back. You can then rotate the screen so that it lies flat against the camera back, as shown on the left in Figure 1-4, or leave it hanging off the side of the camera, as shown on the right, rotating it to see the best view of your subject.



WARNING

If you swing the monitor all the way out without rotating it, so that the the screen faces forward and peers at your subject from the same perspective as the lens, the camera enters Self-Portrait mode. Self-Portrait mode enables you to see yourself on the monitor while you shoot selfies, but it puts certain standard shooting options off limits. So avoid the forward-facing monitor position unless you want to use Self-Portrait mode. I explain Self-Portrait mode at the end of this chapter.



**FIGURE 1-3:** Position the lens so that its mounting index aligns with the one on the camera.

**FIGURE 1-4:** You can keep the monitor flat against the camera or rotate it to the side to allow for different viewing angles.



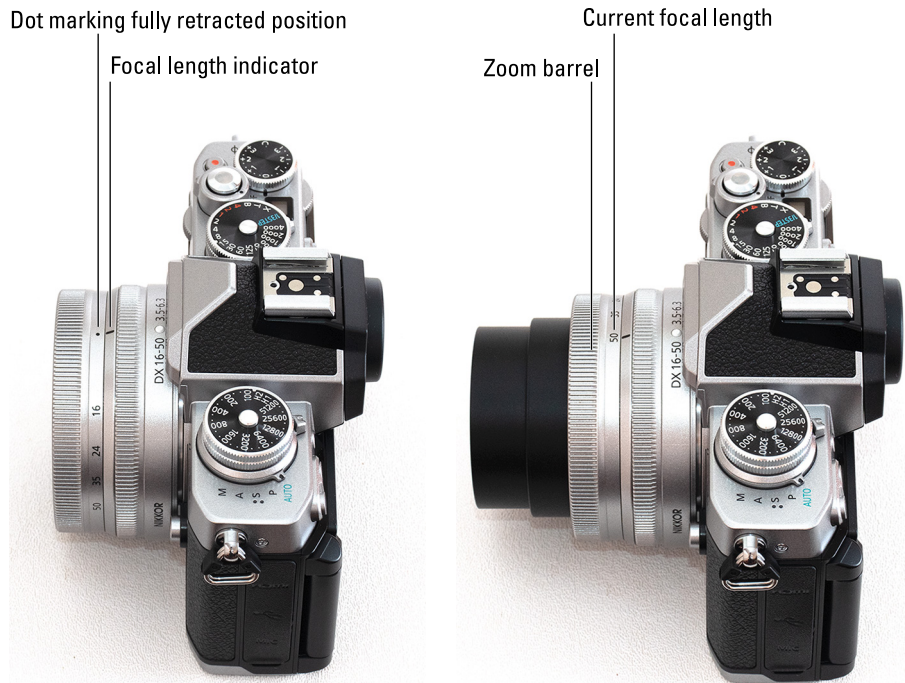
**5. Turn on the camera and enter the language, time zone, and current date and time.**

When you power up the camera for the first time, you can't take any pictures until you select the language you want the camera to use for menus and other text in the displays. You also need to set the time zone as well as the current date and time. The easiest method is to use the touchscreen. To select an option, tap it on the monitor. When you finish adjusting the settings on a screen, tap OK to move to the next setup screen.

You also can use the *Multi Selector*, which is the four-way rocker switch that surrounds the OK button on the back of the camera. Press the edges of the Multi Selector up, down, right, or left to highlight an option; press OK to select the option. Press OK again after entering information.

**6. If you're using a retractable lens, extend the lens.**

Some lenses, including the one featured in this book, are *retractable* — you can collapse them when you're not shooting, saving space in your camera bag. Figure 1-5 shows you what I mean. On the 16–50mm kit lens, notice the black dot and black line on the lens; when the lens is fully retracted, the two are aligned, as shown on the left side of the figure.



**FIGURE 1-5:** Here's a look at the 16–50mm kit lens in its retracted position (left) and extended position (right).

If you turn on the camera when the lens is retracted, the camera asks you to extend the lens. To extend the 16–50mm kit lens, rotate the *zoom barrel*, labeled in the figure, toward the shutter button. To retract the lens again, rotate in the other direction until the dot and line are once again aligned. You need to apply a little pressure — just a little! — to extend the lens and to return it to the fully retracted position. (That resistance is a good thing because you can't accidentally extend or retract the lens.)



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

The black line on the lens is the *focal length indicator*. When you use a zoom lens (the 16–50mm kit lens is a zoom lens), the number that aligns with the indicator when the lens is extended represents the current lens focal length. In the figure, the focal length is 50mm, for example. If you're unfamiliar with the term *focal length*, don't worry about it. I cover that topic and other lens details later in this chapter, in the section "Exploring a Few Lens Features."

## 7. Remove the lens cap.

Now the monitor displays a preview of what the lens is seeing, along with a bunch of data that you can ignore at the moment. If you look through the viewfinder, you see the same thing but with the data arranged a little differently than on the monitor.



TIP

The eye sensor labeled in Figure 1-6 detects your eye when you look through the viewfinder. In response, the camera turns on the viewfinder display and turns off the monitor.

Don't see anything in the displays? Assuming that you didn't turn off the camera, it may be taking a nap to save battery power. To wake the camera, press the shutter button halfway and release it.

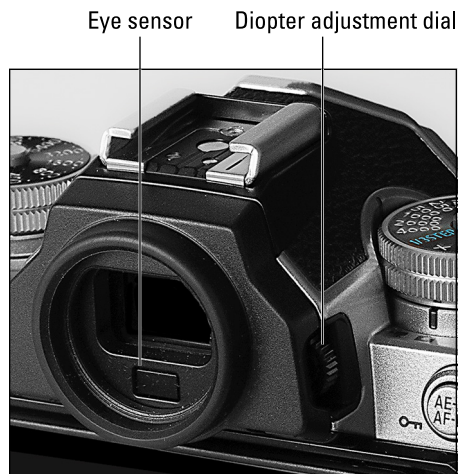
## 8. Adjust the viewfinder to your eyesight.

If you don't take this step, subjects that appear out of focus in the viewfinder might actually be in focus, and vice versa. If you wear glasses while shooting, adjust the viewfinder with your glasses on.

To start, locate the diopter adjustment dial, labeled in Figure 1-6. Put your index finger on the dial, look through the viewfinder, and concentrate on the onscreen data. Then rotate the dial until the data appears sharpest. Ignore the live scene; it won't get any more or less sharp, because you're not actually focusing the camera.



WARNING



**FIGURE 1-6:** Rotate this dial to adjust the viewfinder to your eyesight.



That's all there is to it — the camera is now ready to go. If you're itching to take a few test shots, flip to the end of this chapter for a primer in shooting in Auto mode and Self-Portrait mode, the simplest Shooting modes offered by the Z fc. Just promise to head back this way when you're done, because the pages in between contain information that will help you better understand your camera's basic operations.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

## MEMORY CARDS: HOW BIG, HOW FAST?

SD memory cards offer different capacities and *read/write speeds*, which refers to how quickly they can record and transfer data. Of course, because this camera component is really a computer-related item, The Powers That Be use cryptic symbols and acronyms to indicate capacity and speed. Allow me to simplify things a bit by explaining the most common terms used to describe these specifications:

- **Capacity:** You should see a specific storage capacity in big numbers on the card, usually followed by the letters *GB*. For example, the card shown in Figure 1-1 has a capacity of 64GB. Cards also carry a capacity *category* label: *SD* indicates a capacity of up to 2GB; *SDHC*, 2GB to 32GB; and *SDXC*, 32GB to 2TB (terabytes). As I write this, there actually aren't any SD cards that offer storage capacities greater than 1TB, however.

How large a card should you buy? It depends on your risk tolerance. The greater the capacity, the more photos and videos it can hold — and the more work you lose if that card gets lost or fails. Keep in mind that a 32GB card can hold 764 pictures even when you set the camera to create the largest, highest-quality files. Video files take up more room than photos, so you may want to buy 64GB or 128GB cards if video is your main interest.

- **Card speed:** This specification is stated in several ways, but in all cases, higher numbers indicate speedier cards. Speed is most important for video recording and for *burst* shooting (capturing a rapid-fire series of pictures). At the very least, look for a card that has an SD card speed of 10 (this number is usually inside a circle, as in Figure 1-1). You should also see a *UHS speed class* number ranging from 1 to 3. This value appears inside a u-shaped container. Again, a higher number means a faster card. However, as far as the camera is concerned, you gain no advantage by going beyond UHS speed class 1. So don't pay more for a higher UHS speed unless you plan to use the card in another device that can handle the faster data flow. Finally, most cards now also state the actual data-transfer rate, such as 150MB/s (megabytes per second). Whether you actually see that speed performance depends on the capabilities of the device, however.

# Taking a Brief Camera Tour

The next several pages provide a basic “What’s this thing do?” overview of your camera’s external features.



REMEMBER

In upcoming figures, some buttons bear multiple labels to indicate that they play different roles depending on what camera functions you’re using. For example, some buttons perform one job during shooting and another during picture playback. As Nikon does in the camera’s user manual, I refer to the button by the name that relates to the function I’m discussing. Don’t worry about memorizing the button names, though — when I give instructions in the book, the button appears in the margin or is labeled in a nearby figure.

## Back-of-the-body controls

Starting in the upper left corner and working clockwise around the camera back, you find the following controls, shown in Figure 1-7:



» **Playback button:** Press to start reviewing your photos and videos; press again to return to shooting. Chapter 8 covers picture playback; for movie playback, see Chapter 7.



» **Delete button:** This button offers one way to erase files stored on the memory card. Chapter 9 has specifics.



» **Monitor mode button:** Pressing this button cycles through four Monitor mode settings, which determine when and whether the monitor and viewfinder displays are activated. Look for details on this fairly complex option later in this chapter, in the section “Choosing which displays are active.”

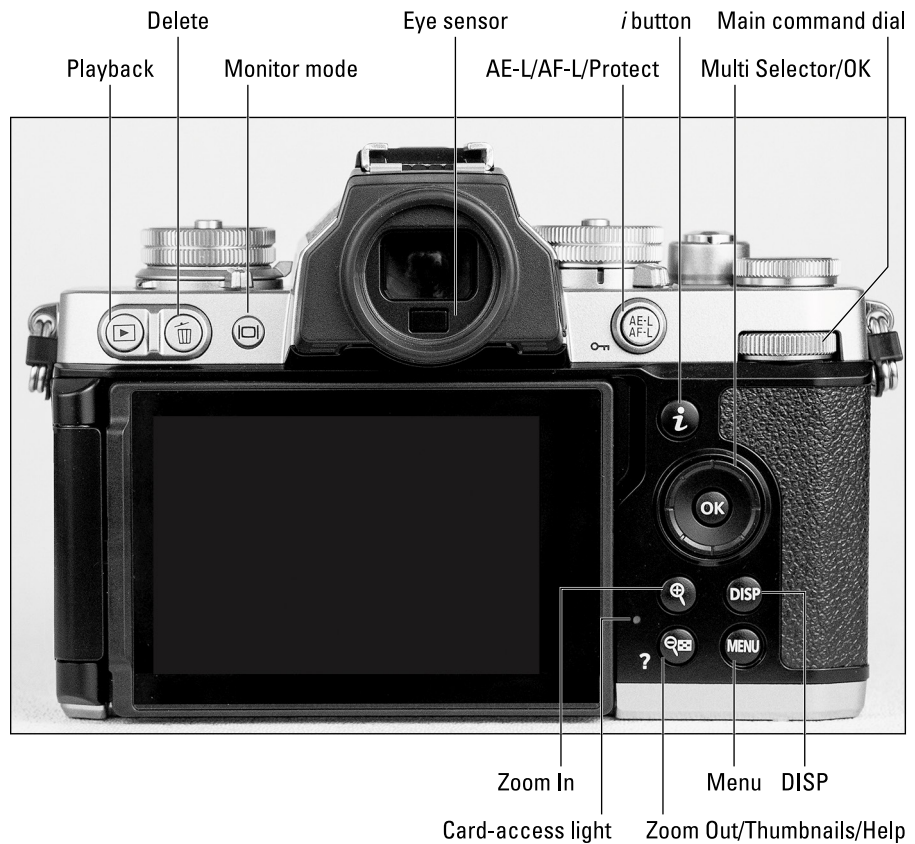
» **Eye sensor:** This window tells the camera when you’re looking through the viewfinder. At the default Monitor mode setting, the camera automatically turns off the monitor and fires up the viewfinder in response. When you take your eye away, the viewfinder goes dark and the monitor preview reappears. Note that the sensor can also be triggered when you move a finger or another object over it, so don’t panic if the monitor turns off and then on again briefly when your eye is nowhere near the viewfinder — you likely just covered the sensor for a second.



» **AE-L/AF-L/Protect button:** When shooting, holding down this button stops the camera from continually adjusting autoexposure and autofocus settings, locking in the current focus distance and exposure. Chapter 3 explains when this tactic comes in handy. During playback, pressing the button locks the file — thus the key symbol near the button — which protects the file from being accidentally deleted when you use the camera’s Delete tool. Formatting

the memory card, a task you can perform via the Setup menu, *does* erase even protected files, however. See the later section “Reviewing a Few More Setup Options” for a better understanding of formatting. Chapter 9 has details about protecting and deleting files. You also have the option of using the button for a different playback function; Chapter 10 explains how to customize the button.

» **Main command dial:** You use this dial to perform a variety of functions, all spelled out as I give instructions throughout the book. For now, the thing to note is that there are *two* command dials. The Main command dial is on the back of the camera, positioned to make it easy to rotate with your thumb. The second dial, the Sub-command dial, is on the front of the camera; use your forefinger to rotate that dial. Adjusting some camera settings involves both dials (although you don’t have to rotate both at once, thankfully), so it’s important to know which is which. You can get a look at the Sub-command dial in the upcoming section “Front-of-the-camera features.”



**FIGURE 1-7:** Familiarize yourself with these back-of-the-camera controls.

» **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 options. In this book, the instruction “Press the Multi Selector right” means to press the right edge of the Multi Selector. I use similar language when you need to press the left, top, or bottom edge.

At the center of the control is the OK button. When you’re choosing settings from menus, you press OK to finalize menu selections. During shooting, an OK symbol in the displays means that you can press OK to activate an autofocus feature called *Subject-tracking AF*, which I explain how to use in Chapter 4. During picture playback, the default function of the OK button is to magnify the image; see Chapter 10 if you want to use the button for a different playback purpose.



» **i button:** Pressing this button displays a special menu that gives you quick access to a handful of settings, as detailed in “Saving Time with the *i* Menu,” later in this chapter.

» **Card-access light:** When you insert a memory card, this light flashes briefly to indicate that the camera recognizes the card. After you take a picture or stop recording a video, the light appears until the camera finishes saving the file to the memory card. Don’t turn the camera before the light goes off; doing so can ruin the file.



» **Zoom In:** When you’re viewing photos, pressing the button magnifies the image and reduces the number of image thumbnails displayed at a time. Chapter 8 has details. During shooting, pressing the button magnifies the live preview so that you can take a close-up look at your subject. More details await in the later section “Magnifying the display.”



» **Zoom Out/Thumbnails/Help button:** During picture playback, pressing the button displays multiple image thumbnails on the screen or reduces the magnification of a photo, if it’s currently magnified. If you use the Zoom In button to magnify the display during shooting, press the Zoom Out button to reduce the magnification level.

The question mark near the button highlights a cool feature of many Nikon cameras: a built-in Help system. When you see a question mark on a camera screen, press the button to display information about the item that’s selected on the screen.



» **DISP button:** The abbreviation stands for *display*, which is fitting because pressing the button alters what data appears in the viewfinder and on the monitor. You can view all display options in the section “Customizing the shooting display,” later in this chapter.



» **Menu button:** Press this button to access camera menus. See “Navigating Menus,” later in this chapter, to find out how to use menus.

# Topside controls

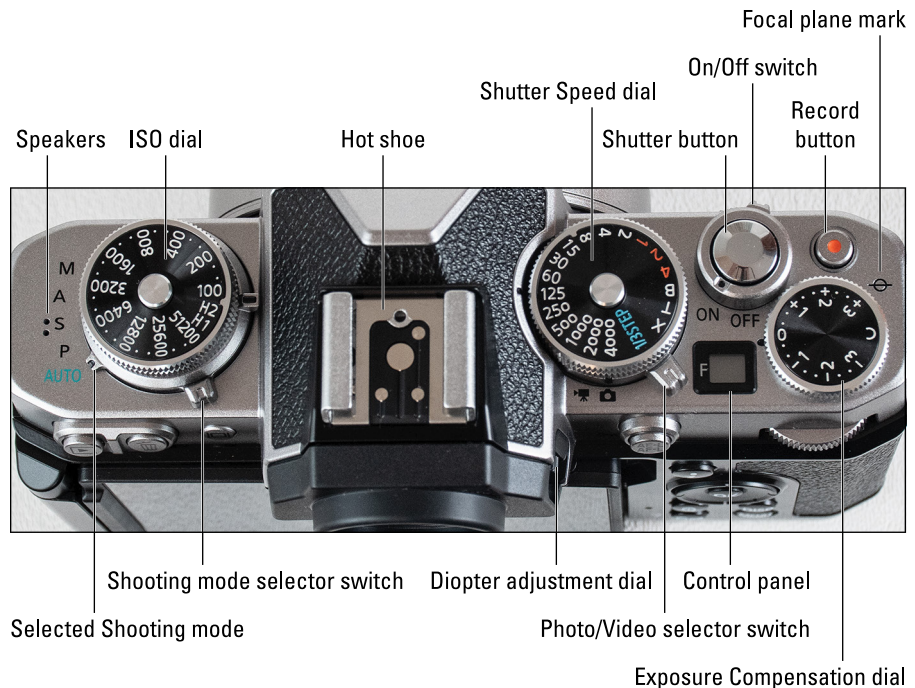
Figure 1-8 shows the top of the camera, which sports the following features:

- » **Speakers:** When you play a video that contains an audio track, the sound comes wafting through these holes.
- » **Shooting mode selector switch:** Move the switch until the notch labeled “Selected Shooting mode” in Figure 1-8 aligns with your desired Shooting mode (Auto, P, S, A, or M). In the figure, Auto mode is selected. Your Shooting mode choice determines how much control you have over exposure and other camera features, including color and focusing options. See the end of this chapter for help with Auto mode; Chapter 2 explains more about all Shooting modes.



REMEMBER

Some photographers substitute the term *exposure mode* for Shooting mode, which can lead novices to the mistaken idea that the setting only relates to picture or video brightness. Again, your choice also determines whether you can access many features totally unrelated to exposure. So in this book, I go with *Shooting mode*, as does the camera user manual.



**FIGURE 1-8:** Controls on top of the camera put important shooting settings at your fingertips.



WARNING

- » **ISO dial:** The ISO setting determines how sensitive the camera is to light, which in turn affects exposure. The black bar to the right of the dial points to the current ISO setting — 100, in the figure.

Before you can rotate the dial, you must press and hold the silver button in the center of the dial. After choosing the new setting, release the button to relock the dial. See Chapter 3 for complete coverage of ISO.

- » **Hot shoe:** A *hot shoe* is a connection for attaching an external flash head such as a Nikon Speedlight. See Chapter 3 for information about using flash with your Z fc. You can also attach certain other accessories, such as a wireless remote control or an external microphone.
- » **Shutter Speed dial:** Another exposure setting detailed in Chapter 3, *shutter speed* determines the duration of the exposure. Like the ISO dial, the Shutter Speed dial sports a lock button. In this case, you don't need to press the button to choose values ranging from the red 4 (4 seconds) to 4000 (1/4000 second). You only need to use the unlock button to access other settings (1/3 step, X, and so on). Chapter 3 provides a tutorial on using the dial and other ways to set the shutter speed.
- » **Photo/Video selector switch:** Use this switch to tell the camera whether you want to shoot photos or videos. For photos, rotate the switch so that the black selector line is aligned with the still-camera symbol, as shown in Figure 1-8. For video, align the mark with the video-camera symbol.
- » **Control panel:** This tiny display doesn't really control anything; rather, it shows the current aperture setting, which is stated in terms of *f-stops*. Chapter 3 helps you understand this exposure setting. If no value appears, the camera is in power-saving mode, which shuts down this display and others. Press the shutter button halfway and release it, and the f-stop setting should appear. In some cases, the display shows data other than the f-stop, which I point out as necessary in later chapters.
- » **On/Off switch:** Okay, I'm pretty sure you already figured out what this switch does. But you may be unaware that the camera has an automatic power-saving feature that puts the monitor and other battery-sucking parts to sleep if you don't press any buttons for a certain period, fooling you into thinking that you turned off the camera. Wake the camera from its slumber by pressing the shutter button halfway and releasing it or by pressing any other button.



REMEMBER

- » **Shutter button:** When you press this button to take a picture, it's critical to take a two-stage approach: Press and hold the button halfway down to initiate autofocus. When focus is set, press the button the rest of the way to take the picture. If you're using autoexposure, your half-press also launches that process, but at the camera's default settings, exposure is adjusted up to the time you press the button all the way.