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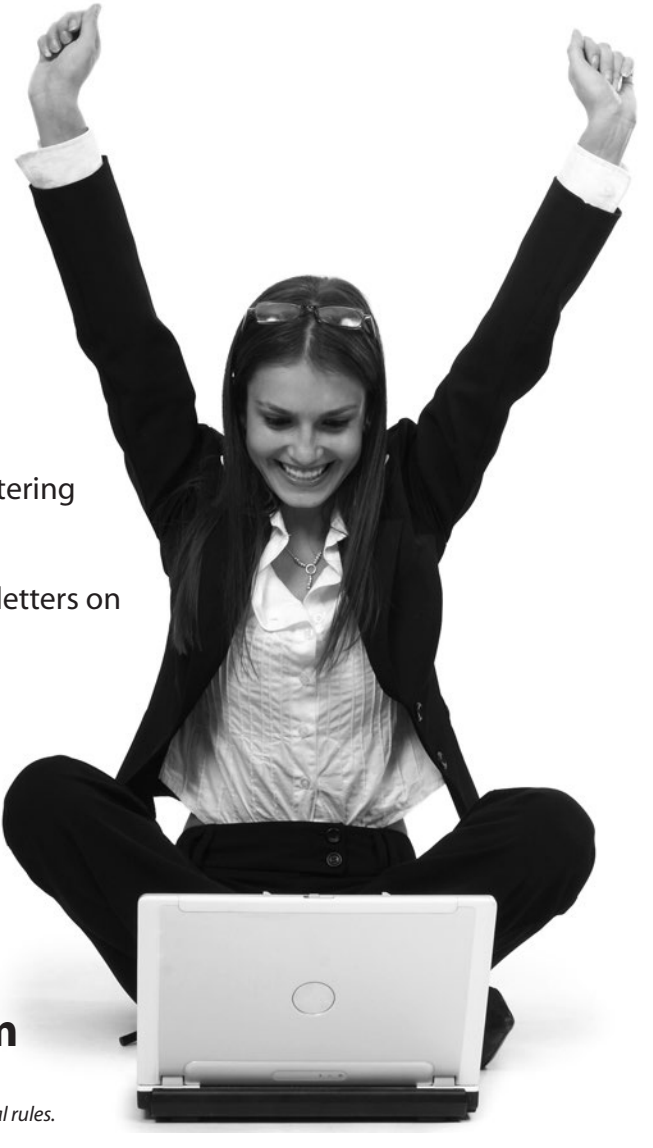

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Canon® EOS Rebel T3/1100D FOR DUMMIES®

Canon® EOS Rebel T3/1100D FOR DUMMIES®

by Julie Adair King and Robert Correll

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Introduction

In 2003, Canon revolutionized the photography world by introducing the first digital SLR camera to sell for less than $1,000, the EOS Digital Rebel/300D. And even at that then-unheard-of price, the camera delivered exceptional performance and picture quality, earning it rave reviews and multiple industry awards. No wonder it quickly became a best seller.

That tradition of excellence and value lives on in the EOS Rebel T3/1100D. Like its ancestors, this baby offers the range of advanced controls that experienced photographers demand plus an assortment of tools designed to help beginners be successful as well. Adding to the fun, the T3/1100D also offers the option to record full high-definition video.

This Rebel is so feature-packed, in fact, that sorting out everything can be a challenge, especially if you're new to digital photography or SLR photography, or both. For starters, you may not even be sure what SLR means, let alone have a clue about all the other techie terms you encounter in your camera manual — resolution, aperture, white balance, and ISO, for example. 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. That's a shame because it's sort of like buying a Porsche Turbo and never pushing it past 50 miles per hour.

Therein lies the point of *Canon EOS Rebel T3/1100D For Dummies.* In this book, you can discover not only 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 books, this one doesn't require any previous knowledge of photography or digital imaging to make sense of concepts, 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 Canon picture-taking powerhouse. Whether your interests lie in taking family photos, exploring nature and travel photography, or snapping product shots for your business, you'll get the information you need to capture the images you envision.

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, we 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 quick look at what you can find in each part:

- **Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps:** This part contains four chapters that help you get up and running with your Rebel T3/1100D. Chapter 1 offers a brief overview of camera controls and walks you through initial setup and customization steps. Chapter 2 explains basic picture-taking options, such as shutter-release mode and image quality settings, and Chapter 3 shows you how to use the camera's simplest exposure modes, including Full Auto and Creative Auto. Chapter 4 explains the ins and outs of using Live View, the feature that lets you compose pictures on the monitor, and also covers movie recording.
- **Part II: Working with Picture Files:** As its title implies, this part discusses after-the-shot topics. Chapter 5 explains picture playback features, and Chapter 6 guides you through the process of transferring pictures from your camera to your computer and then getting pictures ready for print and online sharing. You can also get help with converting pictures shot in the Canon Raw file format (CR2) to a standard format in Chapter 5.
- **Part II: Taking Creative Control:** Chapters in this part help you unleash the full creative power of your camera by moving into semiautomatic or manual photography modes. Chapter 7 covers the all-important topic of exposure, and Chapter 8 offers tips for manipulating focus and color. Chapter 9 wraps up the part with a quick-reference guide to the camera settings and shooting strategies that produce the best results for specific types of pictures: portraits, action shots, landscape scenes, close-ups, and more.
- **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 shows you how to fix less-than-perfect images using the free software provided with your camera. Chapter 11 closes out the book with a review of camera features that, though not found on most "Top Ten Reasons I Bought My Rebel T3/1100D" 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:

- This icon highlights information that's 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.

- When you see this icon, look alive. It indicates a potential danger zone that can result in much wailing and teeth-gnashing if it's ignored.

- Lots of information in this book is of a technical nature — digital photography is a technical animal, after all. But if we present a detail that's useful mainly for impressing your geeky friends, we mark it with this icon.

- A Tip icon flags information that saves you time, effort, money, or another valuable resource, including your sanity.

Additionally, we need to point out a few other details that will help you use this book:

- **Other margin art:** Replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen graphics also appear in the margins of some paragraphs and in some tables. We include these images to provide quick reminders of the appearance of the button or option being discussed.
- **Software menu commands:** In sections that cover software, a series of words connected by an arrow indicates commands you choose from the program menus. For example, if a step tells you, "Choose File➪Export," click the File menu to unfurl it and then click the Export command on the menu.
- **Camera firmware:** *Firmware* is the internal software that controls many of your camera's operations. This book was written using version 1.0.4 of the firmware, which was the most current at the time of publication.

  Occasionally, Canon releases firmware updates, and you should check its Web site (www.canon.com) periodically to find out whether any updates are available. (Chapter 1 tells you how to determine which firmware version your camera is running.) If you download an update, be sure to read the accompanying description of what it accomplishes so that you can adapt this book's instructions as necessary.

About the Software Shown in This Book

In chapters that cover picture downloading and editing, we show you how to get things done using the free Canon software that ships on one of the two CDs in your camera box. (The other CD contains the software manuals in electronic form.) Rest assured, though, that the tools used in these programs work similarly in other programs, so you should be able to easily adapt the steps to whatever software you use.

eCheat Sheet

As a little added bonus, you can find an electronic version of the famous *For Dummies* Cheat Sheet at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/canoneosrebel t31100d. The Cheat 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.

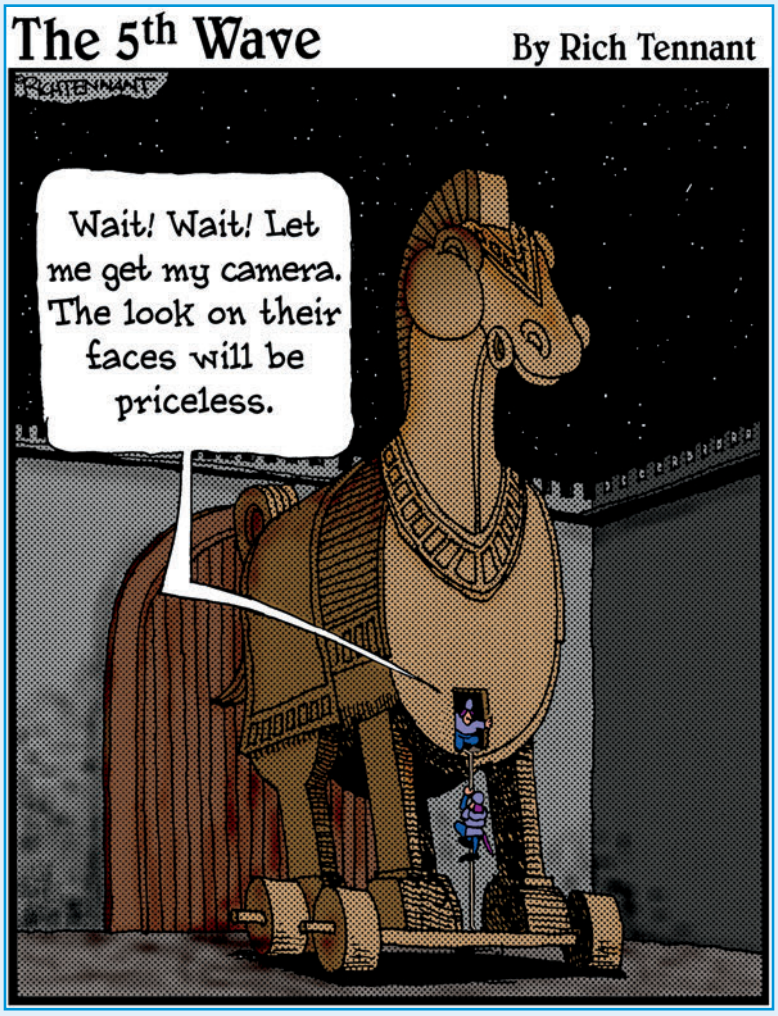
Practice, Be Patient, and Have Fun!

To wrap up this preamble, we 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 a little mind-boggling at first. 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. 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, we invite you to grab your camera and a cup of whatever it is you prefer to sip while you read and then start exploring the rest of this book. Your Rebel T3/1100D is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and we thank you for allowing us, in this book, to serve as your tour guides.

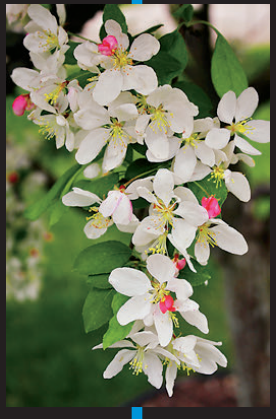
Part I

Fast Track to Super Snaps



Making sense of all the controls on your T3/1100D isn't a task you can complete in an afternoon — or, heck, in a week or maybe even a month. But that doesn't mean you can't take great-looking pictures today. By using your camera's point-and-shoot exposure modes, you can capture terrific images with very little effort. All you do is compose the scene, and the camera takes care of almost everything else.

This part shows you how to take best advantage of your camera's most-automatic photography modes and also addresses some basic setup steps, such as adjusting the viewfinder to your eyesight and getting familiar with the camera menus, buttons, and dials. In addition, chapters in this part explain a few picture-taking settings that come into play in any exposure mode and show you how to use your camera's Live View and movie-making features.



1

Getting the Lay of the Land

In This Chapter

- Attaching and using an SLR lens
- Adjusting the viewfinder focus
- Working with camera memory cards
- Getting acquainted with external camera controls
- Selecting options from menus
- Using the Shooting Settings and Quick Control displays
- Customizing basic camera operations

For many people, getting your first *serious* camera means moving from a point and shoot to an SLR (single lens reflex) model. Like with any growth spurt, the excitement of the move is often tempered with a bit of anxiety. Sure, you'll be able to do lots of new things with your dSLR (digital SLR), but along with that newfound capability comes a barrage of new buttons, knobs, LCD menus, and mechanical knickknacks. Heck, this may be the first time you've even changed a lens on a camera — a big step in itself.

If the Rebel T3/1100D is both your first SLR *and* your first digital camera, you're getting something of a double-whammy in the New Stuff department. But fear not: With some practice and the help of this chapter, which introduces you to each external control, we explain in simple language how to adjust camera settings and offer advice on a few setup options. You'll get comfortable with your new camera quickly.

Getting Comfortable with Your Lens

One of the biggest differences between a point-and-shoot camera and an SLR camera is the lens. With an SLR, you can swap lenses to suit different photographic needs, going from an extreme close-up lens to a super-long telephoto, for example. Additionally, an SLR lens has a movable focusing ring that allows you to focus manually instead of relying on the camera's autofocus mechanism. Even this basic difference extends your picture-making opportunities in big ways.

Of course, those added capabilities mean that you need a little background information to take full advantage of your lens. To that end, the next several sections explain the process of attaching, removing, and using this critical part of your camera.

Attaching a lens

Your camera accepts two categories of Canon lenses: those with an EF-S design and those with a plain-old EF design.

The EF stands for *electro focus;* the S, for *short back focus.* And that simply means the rear element of the lens is closer to the sensor than with an EF lens. And no, you don't need to remember what the abbreviation stands for. Just make sure that if you buy a Canon lens other than the one sold with the camera, it carries either the EF or EF-S specification. You get the best end of this deal because the T3/1100D is compatible with both new types of Canon lenses, whereas EF-compatible cameras can only fit the EF type lenses. If you want to buy a non-Canon lens, check the lens manufacturer's website to find out which lenses work with the Rebel T3/1100D.

Whatever lens you choose, follow these steps to attach it to the camera body:

1. **If you don't already have a lens attached, remove the cap that covers the lens mount on the front of the camera.**

   You'll be in this situation the first time you take the camera out of it's box, and if you like putting the body cap back on when you're done shooting. If there's already a lens attached, you'll have to remove it rather than this cap (see the next series of steps) to put another one one.

2. **Remove the cap that covers the back of the lens.**

3. **Locate the proper lens mounting index on the camera body.**

   A *mounting index* is simply a marker that tells you where to align the lens with the camera body when connecting the two. Your camera has two of these markers — one red and one white — as shown in Figure 1-1.

Which marker you use to align your lens depends on the lens type:

- *Canon EF-S lens:* The white square is the mounting index.
- *Canon EF lens:* The red dot is the mounting index.

Figure 1-1: Which index marker you should use depends on the lens type.

For a non-Canon lens, check the lens manual for help with this step.

4. **Align the mounting index on the lens with the correct one on the camera body.**

   The lens also has a mounting index. Figure 1-2 shows the one that appears on the so-called *kit lens* — the EF-S 18–55mm IS (Image Stabilizer) zoom lens that Canon sells as a unit with the Rebel T3/1100D. If you buy a different lens, the index marker may be red or some other color, so again, check the lens instruction manual.

5. **Keeping the mounting indexes aligned, position the lens on the camera's lens mount.**

6. **Turn the lens in a clockwise direction until the lens clicks into place.**

   In other words, turn the lens toward the lens-release button, as indicated in Figure 1-2.

Always attach (or switch) lenses in a clean environment to reduce the risk of getting dust, dirt, and other contaminants inside the camera or lens. Changing lenses on the beach on a windy day, for example, isn't a good idea. For added safety, point the camera body slightly down when performing this maneuver. Doing so helps prevent any flotsam in the air from being drawn into the camera by gravity.

Removing a lens

To detach a lens from the camera body, take these steps:

1. **Locate the lens-release button on the front of the camera, labeled in Figure 1-2.**
2. **Grip the rear collar of the lens.**

   In other words, hold onto the stationary part of the lens that's closest to the camera body.
3. **Press the lens-release button while turning the lens away from the lens-release button (counterclockwise).**

   You can feel the lens release from the mount at this point. Lift the lens off the mount to remove it.
4. **Place the rear protective cap onto the back of the lens.**

   If you aren't putting another lens on the camera, cover the lens mount with the protective cap that came with your camera, too. These steps help keep your lens and camera interior dust-free.

Figure 1-2: Place the lens in the lens mount with the mounting indexes aligned.

Using an IS (Image Stabilizer) lens

The 18–55mm lens sold with the Rebel T3/1100D camera offers image stabilization. On Canon lenses, this feature is indicated by the initials *IS* in the lens name.

Image stabilization attempts to compensate for small amounts of camera shake that are common when photographers handhold their cameras and use a slow shutter speed, a lens with a long focal length, or both. Camera shake is a problem because it can result in blurry images, even when your focus is dead-on. Although image stabilization can't work miracles, it does enable most people to capture sharper handheld shots in many situations that they otherwise couldn't.

When you use a tripod, image stabilization can have detrimental effects because the system may try to adjust for movement that isn't actually occurring. Although this problem shouldn't be an issue with most Canon IS lenses, if you do see blurry images while using a tripod, try setting the Stabilizer switch (shown in Figure 1-3) to Off. You also can save battery power by turning off image stabilization when you use a tripod. If you use a monopod, leave image stabilization turned on so that it can help compensate for any accidental movement of the monopod. (Julie never can keep those things perfectly still, no matter how hard she tries — but then again, she drinks way too much coffee.)

If you use a non-Canon lens, the image stabilization feature may go by another name: anti-shake, vibration compensation, and so on. In some cases, the manufacturers may recommend that you leave the system turned on or select a special setting when you use a tripod, so be sure to check the lens manual for information.

Whatever type of lens you use, image stabilization isn't meant to eliminate the blur that can occur when your subject moves during the exposure. That problem is related to shutter speed, a topic you can explore in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 offers more tips for blur-free shots and explains focal length and its effect on your pictures.

Shifting from autofocus to manual focus

Your Rebel T3/1100D offers an excellent autofocusing system, which you can find out how to exploit to its best advantage in Chapter 8. However, with some subjects (such as low-contrast scenes, like foggy mornings), autofocusing can be slow or impossible, which is why your camera also offers manual focusing.

Make the shift from auto to manual focus as follows:

1. **Set the AF/MF switch on the side of the lens to the MF position.**

   This switch sets the focus operation to either auto (AF) or manual (MF). Figure 1-3 shows you the switch as it appears on the Rebel T3/1100D kit lens. The switch should be in a similar location on other Canon lenses. If you use a lens from another manufacturer, check the lens instruction manual.

Figure 1-3: Image Stabilization can help ensure sharper handheld shots.

2. **Look through the viewfinder and twist the focusing ring until your subject comes into focus.**

   On the kit lens, the focusing ring is at the far end of the lens barrel, as indicated in Figure 1-3. If you use another lens, the focusing ring may be located elsewhere, so check your lens manual.

   If you have trouble focusing, you may be too close to your subject; every lens has a minimum focusing distance. (For the kit lens, the minimum