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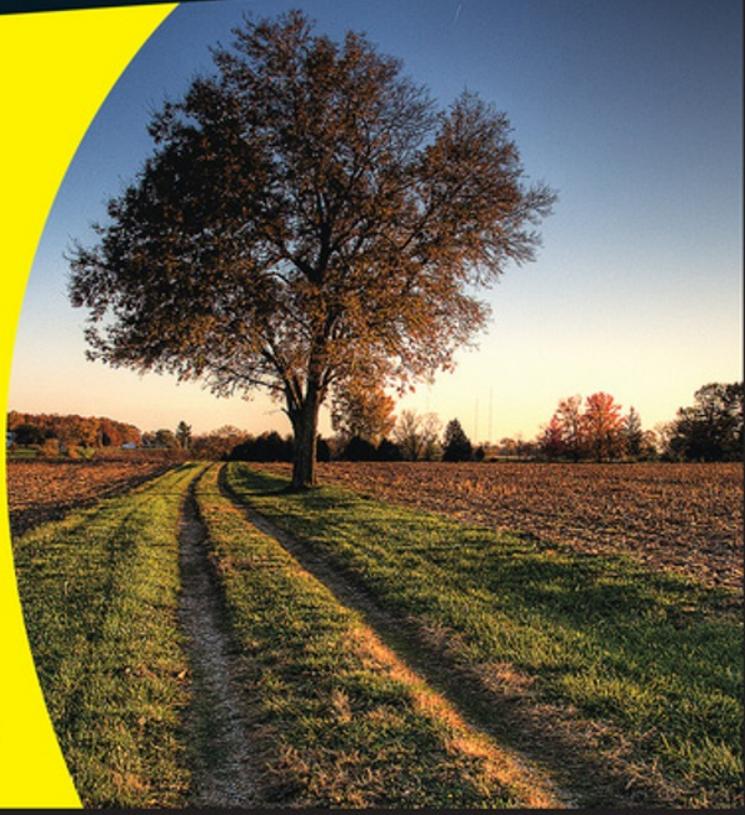
Learn to:

- Adjust your camera's settings for maximum results
- Shoot right away in auto mode or get creative in manual mode
- Master the touchscreen and share your photos wirelessly

IN FULL COLOR!

Julie Adair King

Author of Digital Photography For Dummies



Nikon® D5500™

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by Julie Adair King

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Nikon® D5500™ For Dummies®

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Nikon D5500 For Dummies

Introduction

Nikon. The name has been associated with top-flight photography equipment for generations. And the introduction of the D5500 has only enriched Nikon's well-deserved reputation, offering all the control that a diehard photography enthusiast could want while providing easy-to-use, point-and-shoot features for the beginner.

In fact, the D5500 offers so *many* features that sorting them all out can be more than a little confusing, especially if you're new to digital photography, SLR photography, or both. For starters, you may not even be sure what SLR means or how it affects your picture-taking, let alone have a clue about all the other techie terms you encounter in your camera manual — *resolution*, *aperture*, *white balance*, and so on. 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.

Therein lies the point of *Nikon D5500 For Dummies*. Throughout this book, you can discover not just 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 things, 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 Nikon picture-taking powerhouse.

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, I've 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 brief preview of what you can find in each part of the book:

- ✓ **Part I: Fast Track to Super Snaps:** Part I 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 exposure mode. Chapter 2 introduces you to other exposure modes and also explains basic picture options such as Flash mode, Shutter Release mode, Image Size (resolution), and Image Quality (JPEG or Raw).

- ✓ **Part II: Taking Creative Control:** Chapters in this part help you unleash the full creative power of your camera by detailing the advanced shooting modes (P, S, A, and M). Chapter 3 covers the critical topic of exposure; Chapter 4 explains how to manipulate focus; and Chapter 5 discusses color controls. 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, landscape scenes, and close-ups. Chapter 7 shifts gears, moving from still photography to HD movie recording with your D5500.
- ✓ **Part III: After the Shot:** This part offers two chapters, both dedicated to tasks you do after you press the shutter button. Chapter 8 explains how to review your pictures on the camera monitor and connect your camera to a TV for large-screen playback. Chapter 9 topics include rating, deleting, and protecting photos, downloading images to your computer or to a tablet or smartphone, processing Raw files, and preparing pictures for online sharing.
- ✓ **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 details options for customizing your camera, including changing the function of some buttons and entering a copyright notice that your camera can add to your picture files. Chapter 11 covers the photo-editing and effects tools found on the camera's Retouch menu and also shows you how to use the Effects exposure mode to add special effects to movies and photos as you record them. At the end of the chapter, I show you how to create a slide show featuring your best work.

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:



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.

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.



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



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, I need to point out these extra details that will help you use this book effectively:

- ✓ **Other margin art:** Replicas of some of your camera's buttons and onscreen symbols also appear in the margins of some paragraphs. I include these to provide a quick reminder of the appearance of the button or feature being discussed.
- ✓ **Software menu commands:** In sections that cover software, a series of words connected by an arrow indicates commands that you choose from the program menus. For example, if a step tells you to “Choose File ⇨ Convert Files,” click the File menu to unfurl it and then click the Convert Files command on the menu.

Beyond the Book

If you have Internet access, you can find a bit of extra content online, including this book's Cheat Sheet.

- ✓ The Cheat Sheet found at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/nikond5500 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.
- ✓ In addition, find a few articles at www.dummies.com/extras/nikon offering additional advice about your camera and photography in general. For example, you can find an article about the seven Picture Control settings that come with your camera.

Practice, Be Patient, and Have Fun!

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 D5500 is the perfect partner for your photographic journey, and I thank you for allowing me, through this book, to serve as your tour guide.

Part I

Fast Track to Super Snaps



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In this part . . .

- ✔ Familiarize yourself with the basics of using your camera, from attaching lenses to navigating menus.
- ✔ Find step-by-step instructions for point-and-shoot photography in Auto mode.
- ✔ Try out Live View shooting and customize the Live View display.
- ✔ Find out how to select the shutter-release mode, exposure mode, Image Size (picture resolution), and Image Quality (file type, JPEG or Raw).
- ✔ Discover options available for flash photography in different exposure modes.

First Steps, First Shots

In This Chapter

- ▶ Preparing the camera for its first outing
- ▶ Getting acquainted with the touchscreen and other camera features
- ▶ Viewing and adjusting camera settings
- ▶ Setting a few basic preferences
- ▶ Taking a picture in Auto mode

Shooting for the first time with a camera as sophisticated as the Nikon D5500 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 buttons, dials, and menu options.

Well, fear not: This chapter provides the information you need to start getting comfortable with your D5500. 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 some basic setup options. At the end of the chapter, I walk you step-by-step through taking your first pictures using Auto mode, which offers point-and-shoot simplicity until you're ready to step up to more advanced options.

Preparing the Camera for Initial Use

After unpacking your camera, you have to assemble a few parts. In addition to the camera body and the supplied battery (be sure to charge it before the first use), you need a lens and a



memory card. Later sections in this chapter provide details about working with lenses and memory cards, but here's what you need to know up front:



- ✓ **Lens:** You can mount a wide range of lenses on your D5500, but some aren't compatible with all camera features. For example, to enjoy autofocus, you need an AF-S or AF-I lens. (The 18–55mm and 18–140mm lenses available as a kit with the D5500 body are both AF-S lenses.) Your camera manual offers details about lens compatibility.

The *AF* in AF-S stands for *autofocus*, and the *S* stands for *silent wave*, a Nikon autofocus technology. AF-I lenses are older, professional-grade (expensive) lenses that are no longer made but may be available on the secondhand market.

- ✓ **SD (Secure Digital) memory card:** Your camera accepts only this type of card. Most SD cards carry the designation SDHC (for *High Capacity*) or SDXC (for *eXtended Capacity*), depending on how many gigabytes (GB) of data they hold. SDHC cards hold from 4GB to 32GB of data; the SDXC moniker is assigned to cards with capacities greater than 32GB.

With camera, lens, battery, and card within reach, take these steps:

1. **Turn the camera off.**
2. **Install the battery into the compartment on the bottom of the camera.**
3. **Attach a lens.**

First, remove the caps that cover the front of the camera and the back of the lens. Then align the *mounting index* (white dot) on the lens with the one on the camera body, as shown in Figure 1-1. After placing the lens on the camera mount, rotate the lens toward the shutter-button side of the camera. You should feel a solid click as the lens locks into place.

4. **Insert a memory card.**

Open the card-slot cover on the right side of the camera and orient the card as shown in Figure 1-2 (the label faces the back of the camera). Push the card gently into the slot and

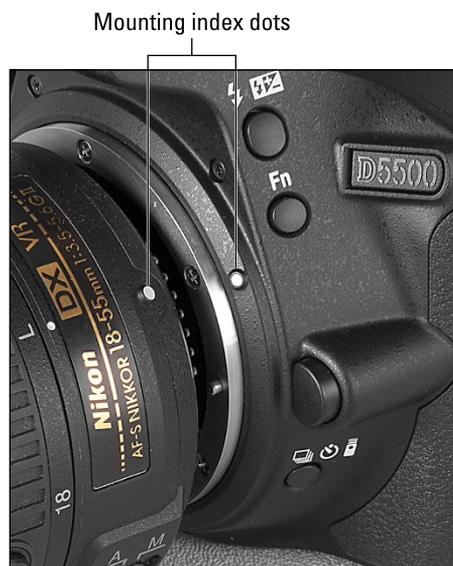


Figure 1-1: Align the white dot on the lens with the one on the camera body.

close the cover. The memory-card access light, labeled in the figure, illuminates briefly to let you know that the camera recognizes the card.

5. Rotate the monitor to the desired viewing position.

When you first take the camera out of its box, the monitor is positioned with the screen facing inward, protecting it from scratches and smudges. Gently lift the right side of the monitor up and away from the camera back. You can then rotate the monitor to move it into the traditional position on the camera back, as shown on the left in Figure 1-3, or swing the monitor out to get a different viewing angle, as shown on the right.



Memory-card access light

6. Turn the camera on.

7. Set the language, time zone, and date.

When you power up the camera for the first time, you can't do anything until you respond to onscreen prompts asking you to select your language, time zone, date, and time. The date/time information is included as *metadata* (hidden data) in the picture file. You can view metadata in some playback display modes (see Chapter 8) and in certain photo programs, including Nikon ViewNX 2. (Refer to Chapter 9.)

Figure 1-2: Insert the memory card with the label facing the back of the camera.

Multi Selector/OK button



Figure 1-3: Here are just two possible monitor positions.



The easiest way to adjust the settings is to use the touchscreen: Just tap an option to select it. On the final screen (date/time), tap OK to finalize your choices. You also can do things the old-fashioned way, using the Multi Selector and OK button, both labeled in Figure 1-3. Press the edge of the Multi Selector up and down to scroll the highlight cursor vertically; press right/left to travel horizontally. Again, press OK after making your selections on a screen.

(You can find more details about using the touchscreen and adjusting camera settings later in this chapter.)

8. Adjust the viewfinder to your eyesight.



This step is critical; if you don't set the viewfinder to your eyesight, 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 — and don't forget to reset the viewfinder focus if you take off your glasses or your prescription changes.

You control viewfinder focus through the adjustment dial labeled in Figure 1-4. (In official lingo, it's called the *diopter adjustment dial*.) After taking off the lens cap and making sure that the camera is turned on, look through the viewfinder and press the shutter button halfway. In dim lighting, the flash may pop up. Ignore it for now and concentrate on the row of data that appears at the bottom of the viewfinder screen. Rotate the dial until that data appears sharpest. The markings in the center of the viewfinder, which relate to autofocusing, also become more or less sharp. Ignore the scene you see through the lens; that won't change because you're not actually focusing the camera. When you finish, press down on the flash unit to close it if necessary.

9. If using a retractable lens, unlock and extend the lens.



The 18–55mm kit lens sold with the D5500 (and featured in this book) is a retractable lens, sometimes called a *pancake* lens. The beauty of this type of lens is that when you're not shooting, you can retract the lens barrel so that the camera takes up less space in your camera bag. However, before you can take a picture, you must unlock and extend the lens. Figure 1-5 shows the lens in its retracted (left image) and extended (right image) positions.

To extend the lens, press the lens lock button, highlighted in Figure 1-5, while rotating the lens barrel toward the shutter button side of the camera. To retract the lens, press the button while rotating the lens in the other direction.

That's all there is to it — the camera is now ready to go. From here, my recommendation is that you keep reading this chapter to familiarize yourself with the main camera features and basic operation. But if you're anxious to



Figure 1-4: Rotate this dial to set the viewfinder focus for your eyesight.



Figure 1-5: If using a retractable lens, press the lens lock button while rotating the lens barrel to extend and retract the lens.

take a picture right away, I won't think any less of you if you skip to the very last section of the chapter, which guides you through the process. Just promise that at some point, you'll read the pages in between, because they actually do contain important information.

Checking Out External Controls

Scattered across your camera's exterior are numerous features that you use to change picture-taking settings, review your photos, and perform various other operations. In later chapters, I discuss all your camera's functions in detail and provide the exact steps to follow to access them. This section provides just a basic "what's this thing do?" guide to each control. (Don't worry about memorizing the button names; throughout the book, I show pictures of buttons in the page margins to help you know exactly which one to press.)



Keep in mind, too, that you can adjust many settings by simply tapping the touchscreen, which is sometimes faster and easier than fiddling with the camera buttons. I provide an introduction to using the touchscreen later in this chapter.

Topside controls

Your virtual tour begins with the bird's-eye view shown in Figure 1-6. There are a number of features of note here:

- ✓ **Shutter button/Power switch:** Okay, I'm pretty sure you already figured out this combo button. But you may not be aware that you need to press the shutter button in two stages: Press and hold the button halfway and wait for the camera to initiate exposure metering and, if you're using autofocus, to set the focusing distance. Then press the button the rest of the way to take the picture.
- ✓ **Mode dial:** With this dial, you set the camera to fully automatic, semi-automatic, or manual exposure mode. Setting the dial to Effects enables you to apply special effects as the image or movie is captured; the Scene setting accesses automatic modes designed for specific types of shots (portraits, landscapes, and so on). Chapter 2 introduces you to each exposure mode.
- ✓ **Command dial:** After you activate certain camera features, you rotate this dial, labeled in the figure, to select a setting. For example, to choose a shutter speed when shooting in shutter-priority (S) mode, you rotate the Command dial.

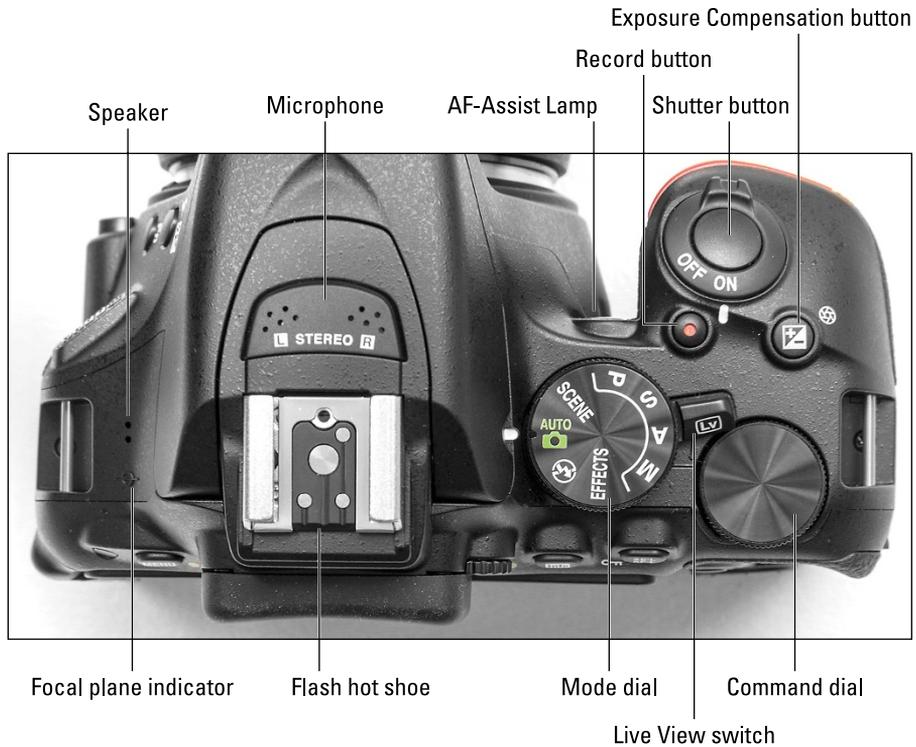


Figure 1-6: Rotate the Live View switch to shift from viewfinder to Live View photography.



- **Exposure Compensation button:** This button relates to Exposure Compensation, a feature that enables you to tweak exposure when using some autoexposure modes, including P, S, and A as well as many Scene modes. (I cover this feature in Chapter 3.) Press the button while rotating the Command dial to set the amount of Exposure Compensation.

In M (manual exposure) mode, pressing the button while rotating the Command dial adjusts the aperture setting.



- **Live View switch:** Rotate this switch to turn *Live View* on and off. In Live View mode, the scene in front of the lens appears on the monitor, and you can't see anything through the viewfinder. You then can compose a still photo using the monitor or begin recording a movie. The last section of this chapter introduces you to Live View photography; see Chapter 7 for help with movie making.



- **Record button:** After shifting to Live View mode, press this button to start recording a movie. Press again to stop recording.



- ✓ **AF-assist lamp:** When you use autofocus in a dark setting, the camera may emit a beam of light from this lamp; the light helps the camera find its focus target. The lamp also lights when you use red-eye reduction flash and the Self-Timer shutter-release mode, both covered in Chapter 2. In situations where the light could be distracting, you can disable it through the Custom Setting menu. Open the Autofocus section of the menu and then set the Built-in AF-assist Illuminator option to Off.
- ✓ **Flash hot shoe:** *Hot shoe* is a photography term for a terminal that enables you to connect an external flash head. On the D5500, the hot shoe also serves as a mounting platform for the optional Nikon ME-1 stereo microphone.
- ✓ **Microphone:** If you don't attach an external microphone, movie audio is recorded using the camera's internal microphone, labeled in Figure 1-6.
- ✓ **Speaker:** When you play a movie, the sound comes wafting out of these holes.
- ✓ **Focal plane indicator:** When you need to know the exact distance between your subject and the camera, the focal plane indicator is the key. The mark indicates the plane at which light coming through the lens is focused onto the camera's image sensor. Basing your measurement on this mark produces a more accurate camera-to-subject distance than using the end of the lens or another external point on the camera body as your reference point.

Back-of-the-body controls

On the back of the camera, you find the following features, all labeled in Figure 1-7.



- ✓ **Wireless remote sensor:** This sensor is one of two receivers that picks up the infrared signal from the optional ML-L3 wireless remote control. The other receiver is on the front-right side of the camera, near the bottom of the hand grip.
- ✓ **Menu button:** Press this button to access menus of camera options. See “Navigating Menus,” later in this chapter, for details.
- ✓ **Viewfinder adjustment dial:** Rotate this dial to adjust the viewfinder focus to your eyesight; see the first section of this chapter for details.
- ✓ **Eye sensor:** This little window senses when you put your eye to the viewfinder and, in response, turns off the monitor to save battery power.
- ✓ **Info button:** When using the viewfinder to compose photos, press this button to display the Information screen, which shows key camera settings and various bits of information, such as the battery status. To turn off the screen, press Info again.



Figure 1-7: For quick access to primary picture settings, press the *i* button.



You also can display the screen by pressing the shutter button halfway and releasing it.

In Live View mode, pressing the button changes the type and amount of data that appears on the preview.



- ✓ **AE-L/AF-L button:** During shooting, pressing this button initiates autoexposure lock (AE-L) and autofocus lock (AF-L). Chapter 3 explains autoexposure lock; Chapter 4 talks about autofocus lock.

In playback mode, pressing the button activates the Protect feature, which locks the picture file — hence the little key symbol that appears near the button — so that it isn't erased if you use the picture-delete functions. See Chapter 9 for details. (The picture *is* erased if you format the memory card, however.)



- ✓ **Playback button:** Press this button to switch the camera to picture-review mode. Chapter 8 details playback features.



- ✓ **i button:** During shooting, pressing this button activates a control strip that enables quick access to certain picture settings. I provide details in the later section “Adjusting Settings via the Control Strip.” Press *i* again to exit the control strip. In Playback mode, pressing the button brings up a menu that enables you to rate your photos, edit them using the Retouch menu features, and tag them for later wireless transmission to a smart phone or tablet.

- ✓ **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 other options. At the center of the control is the OK button, which you press to finalize a menu selection or another camera adjustment.

In this book, the instruction “Press the Multi Selector left” means to press the left edge of the control. “Press the Multi Selector right” means to press the right edge, and so on.



- ✓ **Delete button:** Sporting a trash can icon, the universal symbol for delete, this button enables you to erase pictures from your memory card. Chapter 9 explains the steps.



- ✓ **Zoom In button:** In still-photo playback mode, pressing this button magnifies the currently displayed image and also reduces the number of thumbnails displayed at a time. Note the plus sign in the middle of the magnifying glass — plus means enlarge. During movie playback, press the button to increase audio volume.



- ✓ **Zoom Out button:** This button has three primary purposes:

- *Display help screens:* If you see a question-mark symbol on the screen, press the button to display helpful information about the function you're currently using.
- *Display thumbnails during playback:* In playback mode, pressing the button enables you to display multiple image thumbnails on the screen; thus the little thumbnail grid on the button face.
- *Reduce magnification of displayed photo:* If you magnify an image during playback, pressing the button reduces the magnification amount. The magnifying glass with the minus sign tips you off to this function.

The Zoom Out button also comes into play when you use certain other camera features, such as applying changes from the Retouch menu. During movie playback, pressing the button lowers the sound volume.

Front-left features

The front-left side of the camera, shown in Figure 1-8, sports these features:



✓ **Flash button:** In the advanced exposure modes (P, S, A, and M), as well as in Food Scene mode, pressing this button raises the built-in flash. (In other modes, the camera decides whether the flash is needed.) By holding down the button and rotating the Command dial, you can adjust the Flash mode (fill flash, red-eye reduction, and so on). In some exposure modes, you can adjust flash power by pressing the button while simultaneously pressing the Exposure Compensation button and rotating the Command dial. Check out Chapter 2 for details on flash options.



✓ **Function (Fn) button:** By default, this button gives you quick access to the ISO setting, which controls the camera's sensitivity to light. (Chapter 3 explains.) If you don't adjust that setting often, you can use the button to perform a variety of other operations. Chapter 10 shows you how to change the button's purpose. (**Note:** All instructions in this book assume that you haven't changed the function.)

✓ **Lens-release button:** Press this button to disengage the lens from the camera's lens mount so that you can remove the lens. (If you're using the retractable 18–55mm kit lens, be sure to collapse the lens first.)



✓ **Release Mode button:** Press this button to display a screen where you can select the shutter-release mode. By default, the option is set to Single Frame, which results in one picture each time you press the shutter button. You can explore other options in Chapter 2.



Figure 1-8: Press the Flash button to use the built-in flash in P, S, A, or M mode.

Hidden connections

Hidden under covers on the left and right sides of the camera are ports for attaching various accessories and cables, as shown in Figure 1-9:

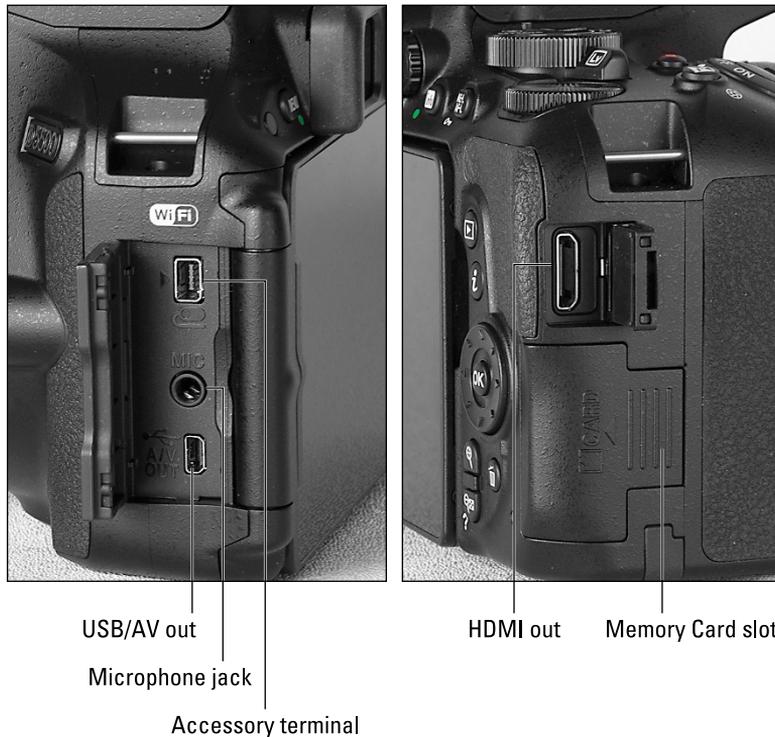


Figure 1-9: Open the covers on the sides of the camera to reveal these connections.

- ✓ **Accessory terminal:** This terminal accepts the following accessories: Nikon MC-DC2 remote shutter-release cable; WR-1 and WR-R10 wireless remote controllers; and GP-1/GP-1A GPS units. I don't cover these optional accessories, but the manual that comes with each device can get you up and running.
- ✓ **Microphone jack:** If you're not happy with the audio quality provided by the internal microphone, you can plug in an external microphone, such as the Nikon ME-1 mic. The jack accepts a 3.5mm plug.