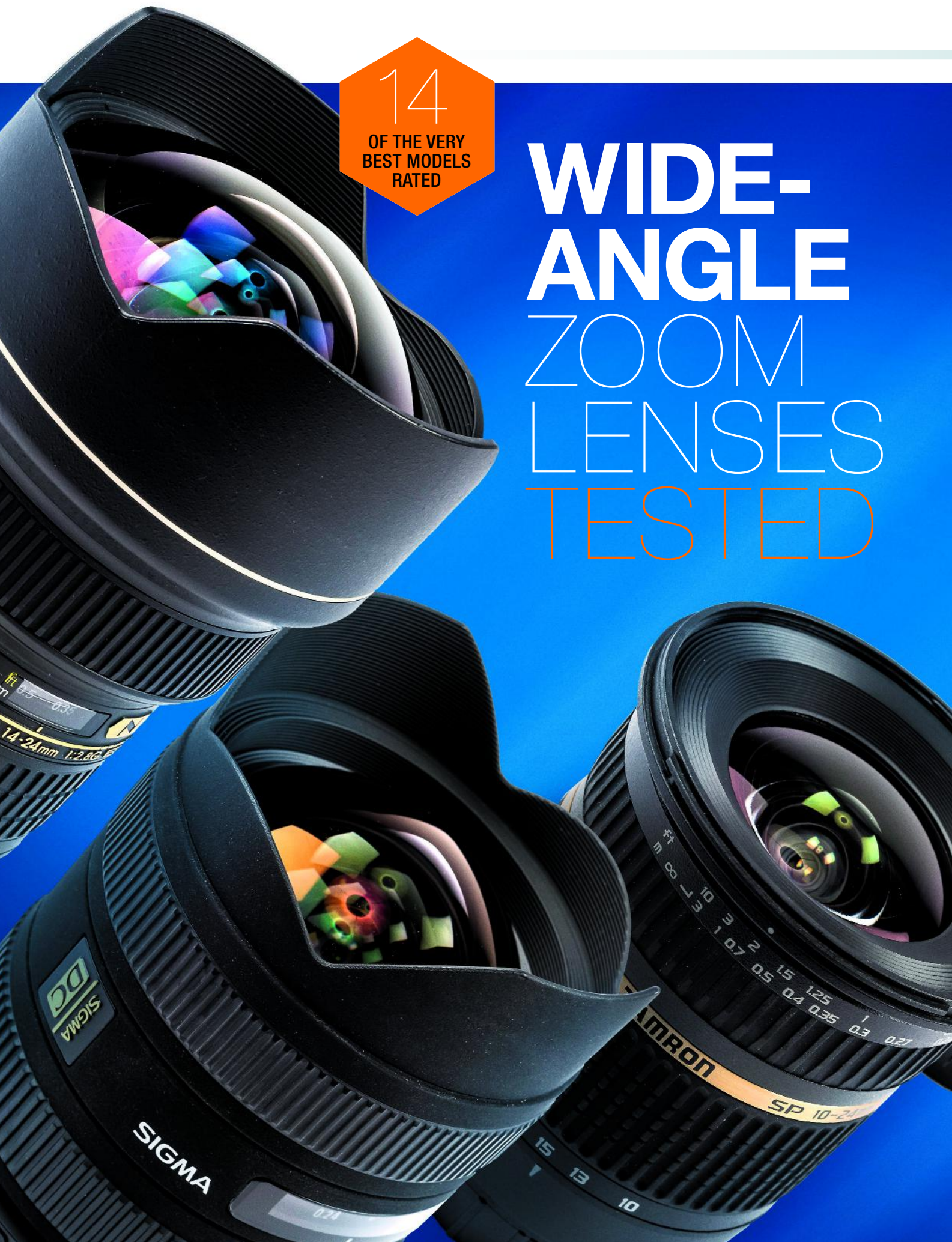


14

OF THE VERY
BEST MODELS
RATED

WIDE- ANGLE ZOOM LENSES TESTED





If you like to shoot street, landscapes or architecture images, a wide-angle lens is an absolute must. These optics allow you to pack more of a scene into the frame, and can help create a feeling of depth. But their ultra-wide angle-of-view isn't their only appeal – they're also fairly compact and lightweight, making them perfect for outdoor photography, plus they have a close minimum focusing distance. To help discover which is the perfect wide-angle optic for your camera, we've tested 14 of the best for APS-C and full-frame.

LENS MOUNT COMPATIBILITY



Canon



Nikon



Pentax



Sigma



Sony

WHAT WE TESTED FULL-FRAME LENSES

- P112** Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8L III USM
- P113** Nikon AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8G ED
- P113** Sigma 12-24mm f/4 DG HSM I ART
- P114** Tamron SP 15-30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD
- P114** Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L USM
- P115** Nikon AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR
- P115** Tokina AT-X 16-28mm f/2.8 PRO FX

APS-C LENSES

- P116** Pentax DA 12-24mm f/4 ED (IF)
- P117** Sigma 10-20mm f/3.5 EX DC HSM
- P117** Tamron SP AF 10-24mm f/3.5-4.5 Di II LD
- P118** Canon EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM
- P118** Nikon AF-S DX 10-24mm f/3.5-4.5G ED
- P119** Tokina AT-X 12-28mm f/4 PRO DX
- P119** Sigma 8-16mm f/4.5-5.6 DC HSM

CHECK OUT THE WIDE-ANGLE LENSES...

FULL-FRAME WIDE-ANGLE ZOOMS

IF YOU OWN A DSLR WITH A FULL-FRAME SENSOR then you need a wide-angle lens to match this format. The main reason for this is that lenses designed for APS-C sensor cameras have a smaller 'image circle' – the circle of light that is transmitted from the end of the lens onto the sensor. The diameter of this circle is smaller than the width of a full-frame sensor, which means the corners of the image simply appear black. On full-frame Nikon, Sony and Pentax cameras there's a crop mode that automatically chops off these corners so you can still use APS-C lenses, albeit with a lower resolution and a less wide angle-of-view. But on Canons the mount is different, so crop lenses won't fit onto full-frame bodies. Full-frame lenses also tend to offer superior image quality and more advanced features.

On the flipside, full-frame lenses are heavier and bulkier than their APS-C cousins. They're also pricier, due to their high-quality manufacture, although the sturdier components do increase their durability.

When using a full-frame lens on a full-frame body, the effective focal length is identical to the one printed on the lens body. And as there's no crop factor, it's possible to fit more of a scene into your composition, making full-frame wide-angles perfect for landscapes and architecture.

How many lens options for each mount?

Each camera manufacturer has its own mount system, so you can only use lenses that are compatible with your brand of camera. Canon users have 10 EF wide-angle optics to choose from. Nikon produces nine FX wide-angle lenses, and all Nikon lenses work on all its cameras, so you can also use DX lenses, at a 1.5x crop. Third-party manufacturers, like Sigma, give consumers more variety than own-brand makes.



OUR PICK OF FULL-FRAME WIDE-ANGLE LENSES...



Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8L III USM £2020

The EF 16-35mm f/2.8L III USM belongs to Canon's flagship L-series, which uses premium materials for superior build and image quality. It offers a constant wide aperture of f/2.8, making it ideal for low light shooting or creating background blur, and a near-circular 9-bladed aperture diaphragm designed for smooth 'bokeh'. Inside the lens there are 16 elements in 11 groups, including large-diameter double-surface Glass Moulded (GMO) lenses and Ultra Low Dispersion elements to reduce distortion and chromatic aberration. There's also Advanced Air Sphere and SubWavelength coatings on the glass to control ghosting and flare. For focusing the lens uses Canon's Ultrasonic Motor (USM) which operates with impressive speed in near silence. Full-time manual control is also available, so you can adjust the focus without leaving AF mode, with a minimum distance of 0.28m. There's an older MkII version of this lens available, priced at £1199.

Image quality

Canon's EF 16-35mm f/2.8L III USM delivered very impressive results during testing. At the wide end of the zoom we detected a small amount of barrel distortion, but this is a one-click fix when you process your RAWs. With the aperture wide open there was some vignetting throughout the zoom range, but it wasn't present when stopped down to f/5.6. Our test images were impressively sharp from the centre of the frame to the corners.

canon.co.uk



The 16-35mm offers an impressive range with over 2x zoom.



You can set the focus manually, even in AF mode.

PROS

- ✦ Constant f/2.8 aperture
 - ✦ Lightweight compared to rivals
 - ✦ Canon L-series
- #### CONS
- ✘ No built-in image stabilisation
 - ✘ Most expensive lens in our test

SPEC

Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 16/11
 Filter size: 82mm
 DxL: 89x128mm
 Weight: 790g

RATING





Nikon AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8G ED £1619

From Nikon's range of professional lenses, the AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8G ED is the second widest full-frame optic on test. It's constructed from top-quality materials, making it tough and resistant to dust and moisture. A Nano Crystal Coat suppresses ghosting and flare, while 2 ED (Extra-low Dispersion) glass elements reduce chromatic aberration. Three aspherical elements work together to minimise distortion and the lens consists of 14 elements in 11 groups. The length of the lens never alters, as it uses Internal Focusing (IF), but it's not possible to use filters with this lens due to the bulbous and protruding front element. Because of this, the 14-24mm lens features an integrated lens hood to reduce flare and protect the front element. A Silent Wave Motor (SWM) offers super-fast and quiet focusing, with full manual override. The constant f/2.8 aperture makes it suitable for low light shooting and the 9-bladed, rounded diaphragm delivers smooth bokeh.



A bulbous front element means you can't use lens filters.



A rubber mount seal makes it resistant to dust and moisture.

Image quality

The Nikon 14-24mm f/2.8 lens boasts a very impressive image quality. At the widest end of the zoom with the aperture set to f/2.8 there's some minor vignetting and the corners are slightly soft, but once stopped down to f/8 these small issues vanish. Shooting at 14mm also creates a bit of barrel distortion, but at the long end of the lens the performance is flawless with impressive corner sharpness – even at f/2.8.

nikon.co.uk

PROS

- ✦ Ultra wide-angle
- ✦ Constant f/2.8 aperture
- ✦ Impressive image quality

CONS

- ✦ Expensive compared to rivals
- ✦ No built-in image stabilisation

SPEC

Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 14/11
 Filter size: n/a
 DxL: 98x132mm
 Weight: 1000g

RATING



Sigma 12-24mm f/4 DG HSM I ART £1649

The widest lens on our test is the 12-24mm f/4 DG HSM I ART, which belongs to Sigma's premium-quality Art range of optics. It boasts a solid construction, with a rubber seal around the mount to protect the electronics from dust and moisture, while a fluorine-like coating on the front and rear elements repels water and grease. To focus the light there are 16 elements in 11 groups, and Sigma's Super Multi-Layer Coating reduces flare and ghosting when shooting backlit scenes. The lens offers a constant aperture of f/4 and a 9-bladed rounded diaphragm delivers smooth out-of-focus areas. To set a quick and quiet focus there's Sigma's Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM), which has been newly designed to provide 1.3x more torque, and it has a minimum focusing distance of 0.24m. It's available to fit Canon, Nikon and Sigma mounts, and will also work with Sony E-mount cameras via the Sigma MC-11 mount converter (sold separately for £199).



It's not possible to use filters due to the bulbous front element.



Sigma's Art range offers premium build and image quality.

Image quality

There's a minor amount of barrel distortion at the wide end of the zoom, but this is easily remedied when you process your images, and there's no distortion at the 24mm end of the focal range. At f/4 we detected a small amount of vignetting in the corners but no discernible chromatic aberration. We found the Sigma 12-24mm Art lens to be sharp across the frame, at all apertures and at both ends of the zoom. It produced the best image quality of any on test.

sigma-imaging-uk.com

PROS

- ✦ Wider field-of-view than rivals
- ✦ Excellent build and image quality
- ✦ Weather-sealed

CONS

- ✦ Second most expensive in test
- ✦ Heavier than all its rivals

SPEC

Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 16/11
 Filter size: n/a
 DxL: 102x132mm
 Weight: 1150g

RATING





Tamron SP 15-30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD £929

The SP 15-30mm f/2.8 Di VC USD is available to Canon, Nikon and Sony shooters from Tamron's Super Performance lens series. It features built-in image stabilisation, and this Vibration Compensation system lets you handhold up to 4 stops slower for sharper low light shooting. The lens also offers a constant f/2.8 aperture throughout the zoom range, and a 9-bladed, rounded diaphragm delivers smooth background blur. To beat distortion and chromatic aberration the lens uses XGM aspherical elements and LD (Low Dispersion) glass, comprising 18 elements in 13 groups and taking the weight to 1100g, which makes it the second heaviest lens here. On the front element there's a fluorine coating to repel moisture and dirt, while eBAND and BBAR anti-reflective coatings counteract ghosting and flare. The USD (Ultrasonic Silent Drive) operates smoothly and discreetly, offers full-time manual override and has a minimum focus distance of 0.28m.

Image quality

We found the Tamron 15-30mm f/2.8 to be a pleasingly sharp lens, both at the centre and the edge of the frame, even with the aperture wide open. At the wide end of the zoom we found a fair amount of barrel distortion, and when zoomed to 30mm the image suffered from some pincushion distortion. There was some minor vignetting at f/2.8, but this was no longer present when the aperture was stepped down. We didn't detect any signs of chromatic aberration.

tamron.eu



Built-in Vibration Compensation for low light shooting.



A special coating repels water from the front element.

- PROS**
- ✦ 4-stop Vibration Compensation
 - ✦ Constant f/2.8
 - ✦ Excellent image quality
- CONS**
- ✘ Heavier than all but one of its rivals
 - ✘ Not possible to use lens filters

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 18/13
 Filter size: n/a
 DxL: 98x145mm
 Weight: 1100g

RATING
 ★★★★★



Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L USM £549

Another from Canon's professional quality L-series, the EF 17-40mm f/4L USM is a bargain at £549. It offers the biggest zoom of any wide-angle lens in our test, making it very versatile, and produces a focal range of 28-70mm when fitted to a DSLR with an APS-C sensor. It uses 3 aspherical elements and Super UD (Ultra-low Dispersion) glass to combat distortion and chromatic aberration. The elements also have a Super Spectra coating to eliminate flare and ghosting when shooting towards the light source. All in all, the lens is comprised of 12 elements in 9 groups, making it the lightest full-frame lens on test at 500g. It offers a constant aperture of f/4 throughout the zoom range and 7 rounded diaphragm blades create a smooth bokeh. A ring-type Ultrasonic Motor (USM) drives the autofocus quietly and quickly, while full-time manual override is available, with a minimum focus distance of 0.28m. Like other L-series lenses, its build makes it highly resistant to moisture and dust.

Image quality

The Canon 17-40mm f/4 lens delivered good sharpness from the centre of the frame to the corners throughout testing. With the zoom set to 17mm we experienced some barrel distortion, and when pulled to 35mm the image suffered from some minor pincushioning, but both are easily fixed in software. With the aperture wide open there was some vignetting, but this disappeared at f/8. We encountered some green and red fringing in test images. canon.co.uk



A flush front element makes it possible to use screw-in filters.



L-series quality offers premium build and materials.

- PROS**
- ✦ Most affordable full-frame wide-angle
 - ✦ Most versatile zoom range
 - ✦ Lightweight
- CONS**
- ✘ Least wide field-of-view in test
 - ✘ Not quite as sharp as some others

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 12/9
 Filter size: 77mm
 DxL: 84x97mm
 Weight: 500g

RATING
 ★★★★★



Nikon AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR £1019

The Nikon AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR is a versatile wide-angle lens with a tough magnesium body and a rubber seal to keep out dust and moisture. When paired with an APS-C Nikon DSLR it offers a zoom range of 24-52mm. It features Nikon's Vibration Reduction (VR) II image stabilisation system, which provides 2.5 stops of blur-free handheld shooting. It offers a constant f/4 aperture, while 9 rounded diaphragm blades deliver a smooth blur to out-of-focus areas. It's light on the scales at only 680g, despite featuring 17 elements arranged in 12 groups. Two ED (Extra-low Dispersion) elements and 3 aspherical elements work to keep distortion and chromatic aberration to a minimum. The glass features a Nano Crystal coating to keep flare and ghosting at bay when light is directly entering the lens. To set a fast and whisper-quiet focus there's Nikon's Silent Wave Motor (SWM), which has a full manual override and a minimum distance of 0.29m.

Image quality

In testing, the Nikon 16-35mm f/4 performed admirably, with pleasing sharpness across the frame and throughout the zoom and aperture range. We encountered some minor vignetting at the wide end of the lens, but this disappeared by the time the lens was stopped down to f/11. There was also noticeable barrel distortion at 16mm, but nothing that couldn't be fixed in post-processing. We detected minimal chromatic aberration. nikon.co.uk



Vibration Reduction lets you shoot 2.5 stops slower.



A rubber seal keeps dust and moisture out of the lens.

- PROS**
- ✦ Built-in Vibration Reduction system
 - ✦ Impressive image quality
 - ✦ Lightweight
- CONS**
- ✘ Expensive price for f/4 aperture
 - ✘ Not as wide as some competitors

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 17/12
 Filter size: 77mm
 DxL: 83x125mm
 Weight: 680g

RATING
 ★★★★★



Tokina AT-X 16-28mm f/2.8 PRO FX £579

For Canon and Nikon owners, the Tokina AT-X 16-28mm f/2.8 PRO FX offers a constant maximum aperture of f/2.8 for faster shutter speeds in low light and increased background blur. Nine rounded aperture diaphragm blades create a smooth blur on the defocus areas. Inside there are 15 elements in 13 groups, and these weigh up to a fairly hefty 950g. Three aspherical elements counteract distortion while 3 SD (Super-low Dispersion) elements minimise chromatic aberration. Multi-layer coatings on the glass are designed to limit ghosting and flare. To focus there's a newly developed silent DC motor that allows the lens to work faster and more quietly than previous models. The DC motor coupled with a new GMR magnetic AF sensor work together to increase AF speed, and there's a minimum focus distance of 0.28m. The one-touch focus clutch mechanism allows the user to switch between AF and MF simply by snapping the focus ring forward and back.

Image quality

This third-party lens boasts impressive image quality, especially when you consider its price-tag. At the wide end of the zoom we found some very minor barrel distortion and, at f/2.8, some vignetting, softer corners and subtle chromatic aberration, but those problems entirely disappear at f/8, with fantastic centre-to-edge sharpness. The lens performs even better at the long end of the zoom, with sharp corner detail even at f/2.8.

tokinalens.com



Due to the bulbous front element you can't use lens filters.



A fixed f/2.8 aperture is ideal for low light photography.

- PROS**
- ✦ Constant f/2.8 aperture
 - ✦ Value for money
 - ✦ Good image quality
- CONS**
- ✘ Heavier than many other lenses
 - ✘ Not possible to use lens filters

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 15/13
 Filter size: n/a
 DxL: 90x133mm
 Weight: 950g

RATING
 ★★★★★

WIDE-ANGLE ZOOMS FOR APS-C

IF YOU OWN A DSLR WITH AN APS-C SENSOR, YOU'RE usually best off with a wide-angle lens that is built for your format. At a glance, it seems as though lenses designed for APS-C cameras tend to offer the widest focal lengths, going as low as 10mm, but don't forget that there's a crop factor to think about, so the effective focal length is always roughly 1.5x longer. This means you have to multiply the focal length stated on the lens body by around 1.5x, so a 20mm lens on an APS-C camera is always the approximate equivalent of a 30mm lens on a full-frame body.

The advantage of using lenses specifically designed for APS-C cameras is that they tend to be much cheaper, much smaller, and much lighter, owing to the fact they contain far less glass. However, there's nothing to stop you using full-frame lenses on any APS-C camera if you wish, bearing in mind you'll still experience the same 1.5x crop factor. There are, however, some distinct advantages to doing this. The first is that because your sensor is much smaller than the image circle – the area of light collected by the lens – you're actually only using light from the central area of glass, where image quality is at its best. This means you're guaranteed sharp results even in the very corners of your frame. Secondly, full-frame lenses tend to be sharper, and usually boast better build quality. And, finally, should you ever upgrade to a full-frame camera, you'll already have a collection of compatible lenses. In other words, you'll be future-proofing your entire lens collection.

How many lens options for each mount?

Canon tops the charts with eight lenses available for the EF-S mount system, exclusively used by its APS-C DSLRs. Nikon users have access to six wide-angle optics, while Sony shooters have a choice of five different lenses. There are four wide-angles available for Pentax DSLRs, and two for Sigma bodies.



OUR PICK OF APS-C WIDE-ANGLE LENSES...



Pentax DA 12-24mm f/4 ED (IF) £739

The DA 12-24mm f/4 ED (IF) is Pentax's only dedicated wide-angle lens for its APS-C DSLRs, although users of this system also have the choice of the Sigma and Tamron lenses featured in our test. This lens has a full-frame equivalent focal length of 18-34mm when the 1.5x crop factor has been applied, and features a maximum constant aperture of f/4. Inside the lens there are 2 aspherical elements and 1 ED (Extra-low Dispersion) element to reduce distortion, and the 13 lens elements are arranged in 11 groups. The 12-24mm has no internal AF motor and so the autofocus generates a moderate degree of noise, but still operates with satisfying speed. There's a Quick Shift focusing system that allows for instant manual override. As the lens achieves focus internally the front element of the lens doesn't rotate, so it's possible to use polariser filters that match the 77mm filter thread. Priced at £739, it's the most expensive APS-C lens in our test.

Image quality

The 12-24mm performed well. With the zoom set to 12mm detail is very sharp across the entire frame, at all aperture settings. When zoomed in to 24mm, the centre remains sharp but the corners become a little more fuzzy. The lens was at its sharpest at f/11. We did detect a fair amount of chromatic aberration and some barrel distortion in test images – more pronounced at the wide end of the zoom – and some vignetting with the aperture wide open.

ricoh-imaging.co.uk



The 12-24mm is designed for the Pentax K-AF mount.



Quick Shift focusing for instant manual override.

PROS

- Constant f/4 aperture
 - Pleasing image quality
 - Lightweight
- #### CONS
- More expensive than rivals
 - Focusing noisy as no AF motor

SPEC

Min aperture: f/22
Elements: 13/11
Filter size: 77mm
DxL: 84x88mm
Weight: 430g

RATING





Sigma 10-20mm f/3.5 EX DC HSM £329

The Sigma 10-20mm f/3.5 EX DC HSM is available for Canon, Nikon, Pentax, Sigma and Sony mounts, and is the most affordable wide-angle optic in our round-up at just £329. Once the APS-C crop factor has been taken into consideration, the lens offers an effective focal range of 15-30mm. The aperture can be set to a maximum of f/3.5 throughout the zoom range and creates a pleasing background blur. Sigma's internal HSM (Hyper Sonic Motor) offers quick and quiet autofocus, while the focusing itself can be set as close as 0.24m with full-time manual focus override. The lens houses 4 aspherical lens elements, 2 ELD (Extraordinary Low Dispersion) elements and an SLD (Special Low Dispersion) element to keep distortion and chromatic aberration to a minimum. The glass also features Super Multi-Layer coatings to keep ghosting and flare at bay. This 10-20mm lens boasts 13 elements arranged in 10 groups, and weighs 520g.

Image quality

With the zoom set to its widest setting, the Sigma produces a slight amount of barrel distortion, but this is easy to fix when editing. At f/3.5 we found the corners of test images to be slightly soft, along with some subtle vignetting. At f/8 the image was sharp and bright across the frame, but instances of chromatic aberration appeared throughout testing. The performance was better at 20mm, with sharper results and less coloured fringing.

sigma-imaging-uk.com



A Hyper Sonic Motor sets the focus quickly and quietly.



Constant f/3.5 aperture allows for faster shutter speeds.

PROS

- ✦ Most affordable wide-angle lens
- ✦ Constant f/3.5
- ✦ Lightweight

CONS

- ✘ Not as sharp as some others
- ✘ Larger thread size makes filters more expensive

SPEC

Min aperture: f/22
Elements: 13/10
Filter size: 82mm
DxL: 87x88mm
Weight: 520g

RATING



Tamron SP AF 10-24mm f/3.5-4.5 Di II LD (IF) £377

Available for Canon, Nikon, Pentax and Sony mounts, the Tamron 10-24mm f/3.5-4.5 offers a full-frame equivalent focal length of 15-36mm. At the widest end of the zoom the maximum aperture setting is f/3.5, but should you zoom to the longer end of the focal length the aperture reduces to f/4.5. Inside you'll find 12 elements in 9 groups, including a glass aspherical lens element and 3 hybrid aspherical elements to counteract distortion. There are also 2 LD (Low Dispersion) elements and a HID (High-refractive Index) element to keep chromatic aberration to a minimum for better colour accuracy. To combat ghosting and flare, the glass features multi-layer and internal surface coatings, while the included flower-shaped lens hood keeps out stray light. There's a minimum focusing distance of 0.24m, and the internal AF motors work fairly quietly without much hesitation. Priced at £377, it's the second most affordable wide-angle lens in our test.

Image quality

The Tamron 10-24mm creates a small amount of barrel distortion at the wide end of the zoom, and there is still a traceable presence when fully zoomed out to 24mm. With the aperture wide open at f/3.5 we found the centre to be pin-sharp but detail in the corners to be slightly soft, and the edges were gently darkened by a vignette. Results improved when the aperture was stopped down to f/8, but we did detect chromatic aberration across our test images.

tamron.eu



Available in mounts for Canon, Nikon, Pentax and Sony.



Internal focusing so you can use polarising filters.

PROS

- ✦ More affordable than most others
- ✦ Tamron's Super Performance range

CONS

- ✘ Variable maximum aperture
- ✘ Some rivals in the test offer better image quality

SPEC

Min aperture: f/22
Elements: 12/9
Filter size: 77mm
DxL: 83x87mm
Weight: 406g

RATING





Ca

Canon EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM £469

Canon's EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM is only compatible with EF-S mount Canon APS-C DSLRs, and the 1.6x crop factor gives this lens an effective focal length of 16-35mm. At just 385g it's the lightest lens in our line-up, making it well suited to travel. It has a variable maximum aperture ranging from f/3.5-4.5 depending on the focal length selected, and 6 circular blades create smooth background blur. Depending on the zoom setting, the 10-22mm lens also has a variable minimum aperture between f/22-27. Inside there are 13 lens elements in 10 groups, and the glass features a Super Spectra coating to keep ghosting and flare to a minimum. The ring-type USM (Ultrasonic Motor) works to provide rapid and precise autofocus, with full manual override available at any time. It operates in near-silence and has a minimum focusing distance of 0.24m. Focusing is internal so the front element doesn't rotate as the AF operates, allowing for filter use.

Image quality

At both ends of the zoom the Canon EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 struggled to render sharp detail towards the corners of the frame, throughout the entire aperture range. We also encountered some chromatic aberration in our test images too. With the aperture wide open, there was some vignetting but this faded once stopped down to f/5.6. At 10mm we found a small amount of barrel distortion but this can easily be fixed from the RAW file.

canon.co.uk



The Ultrasonic Motor sets the AF quickly and quietly.



It's the lightest lens in our group test, weighing only 385g.

- PROS**
- ✦ Lightest lens in our round-up
 - ✦ Versatile zoom range
 - ✦ Competitive price
- CONS**
- ✘ Variable max and minimum aperture
 - ✘ Not compatible with full-frame

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/27
 Elements: 13/10
 Filter size: 77mm
 DxL: 84x90mm
 Weight: 385g

RATING
 ★★★★★



Ni

Nikon AF-S DX 10-24mm f/3.5-4.5G ED £729

For Nikon shooters the AF-S DX 10-24mm f/3.5-4.5G ED offers a versatile 2.4x zoom, equivalent to 15-36mm in 35mm format. It can also be used with FX format Nikon cameras. The optical design features 3 aspherical and 2 ED (Extra-low Dispersion) glass elements to keep image distortion to a minimum. In total there are 14 lens elements organised in 9 groups, and this glass contributes to the 460g weight, which is approximately 25% heavier than Canon's equivalent lens. It also has a variable maximum aperture of f/3.5-4.5 and variable minimum aperture of f/22-29, depending on the focal length selected. The focus is set internally (meaning the front element doesn't rotate as the AF is locked), making it possible to use polariser filters with the 77mm thread. Focusing is achieved with the SWM (Silent Wave Motor) with impressive speed and in near-silence, with a minimum focusing distance of 0.24m. Full-time manual focus override is also available.

Image quality

The 10-24mm lens produces some barrel distortion with the zoom set to 10mm, but it's nothing that can't be fixed. With the aperture set to its maximum of f/3.5 we found detail in the corners of test images to be soft, along with some mild vignetting, but both of these were untraceable when stopped down to f/5.6. We detected chromatic aberration throughout the aperture range at the wide end. Results were much improved at the long end of the zoom.

nikon.co.uk



This DX format lens is compatible with FX format cameras.



The Silent Wave Motor sets the focus rapidly.

- PROS**
- ✦ Bright maximum aperture of f/3.5
 - ✦ Full-frame compatible
 - ✦ Versatile zoom
- CONS**
- ✘ More expensive than rivals
 - ✘ Out-performed on image quality

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/29
 Elements: 14/9
 Filter size: 77mm
 DxL: 83x87mm
 Weight: 460g

RATING
 ★★★★★



Tokina AT-X 12-28mm f/4 PRO DX £449

The Tokina AT-X 12-28mm f/4 PRO DX is built for both Canon and Nikon cameras. On a Canon EF-S DSLR it operates with an effective focal length of 19-45mm, and on a DX format Nikon it's slightly wider at 18-42mm as a result of the different crop factors. It offers a constant maximum aperture of f/4 and 9 aperture blades help create smooth bokeh in out-of-focus areas. A new optical design includes 2 glass aspherical elements and 2 SD (Super-low Dispersion) elements working together to reduce distortion and control chromatic aberration. In total there are 14 lens elements in 12 groups, and multi-layer coatings help to limit ghosting and flare. There's a new AF GMR magnetic precision sensor and a new SD-M (Silent Drive-Module) that has lowered the sounds emitted by the autofocus system, allowing for much quieter AF, and with pleasing speed. Manual focus is set through the one-touch focus clutch AF/MF mechanism, rather than full-time manual override.

Image quality

The Tokina performed well during testing. At 12mm, we detected a mild vignette but stopping down to f/5.6 negated this entirely. There was a modest amount of barrel distortion, but less than most rivals, and we didn't detect any distortion at 28mm. Our test images were satisfyingly sharp across the zoom and aperture range, however at f/4 the corners of the frame were fractionally soft. We detected some chromatic aberration throughout testing. tokinalens.com



A 77mm filter thread allows for use of polarisers and UVs.



One-touch focus clutch switches between AF/MF.

- PROS**
- ✦ Constant f/4 aperture setting
 - ✦ Pleasing image quality
 - ✦ Competitive price
- CONS**
- ✦ Second heaviest in our group test
 - ✦ Not as wide-angle as competitors

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 14/12
 Filter size: 77mm
 DxL: 84x90mm
 Weight: 530g

RATING



Sigma 8-16mm f/4.5-5.6 DC HSM £499

With mounts for Canon, Nikon, Pentax, Sigma and Sony, the Sigma 8-16mm f/4.5-5.6 DC HSM is the widest APS-C optic on the market. It offers a full-frame equivalent focal length of 12-24mm and has a variable maximum aperture of f/4.5-5.6. Internally there are 15 elements in 11 groups – 4 FLD ('F' Low Dispersion glass, which performs akin to fluorite) and 3 aspherical elements working together to keep chromatic aberration and lens distortion at bay. A Super Multi-Layer coating on the glass reduces flare and ghosting. At 555g, this is the heaviest APS-C wide-angle lens on test, and measuring 106mm it's also the longest too. Focusing is set with the HSM (Hyper Sonic Motor) and it has a minimum distance of 0.24m. Due to the front element, it's not possible to use filters with this lens.



A protruding front element means you can't use lens filters.



Available in five mounts, including Canon and Nikon.

Image quality

This super-wide lens boasts impressive image quality, capturing sharp detail across the frame even with the aperture wide open. There was a slight amount of barrel distortion when the zoom was set to 8mm, but this is simple to rectify when editing. We didn't detect any chromatic aberration in the test images we shot, and found test pics sharp across the aperture and zoom range.

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We round up every prosumer mirrorless camera under £1500 to find the perfect DSLR alternative.

TESTED NEXT MONTH

- PROS**
- ✦ Widest APS-C optic available
 - ✦ Impressive image quality
 - ✦ Solid build
- CONS**
- ✦ Heaviest APS-C lens in our test
 - ✦ Variable maximum aperture

SPEC
 Min aperture: f/22
 Elements: 15/11
 Filter size: n/a
 DxL: 75x106mm
 Weight: 555g

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