

Nikon Coolpix S520 digital camera

8 megapixel hit, miss or maybe?

by Stuart Miles published on 15 May 2008

While most manufacturers continue to push the megapixel count in every digital camera they release, Nikon has opted for lucky 8 with the S520, but should you?

The Nikon Coolpix S520 is an 8 megapixel camera, with a 3x optical zoom-Nikkor lens and optical lens shift VR image stabilisation.

Available in a choice of Light Bronze, Urban Black, or purple body colours, the lightweight design is encased in metal and sports a 2.5-inch screen.

To the right of the screen is the usual array of buttons, not too many mind you, and underneath is the rechargeable battery and SD card slot.

The camera does come with an internal memory (enough to store around five images) so getting an SD card should be one of the first things on your list after you buy the camera.

Overall the camera's design is simple and easy to use - this is a point and shoot after all - just don't expect it to draw any attention when you pull it out of your pocket.

Tech features include Face-priority AF, In-Camera Red-Eye Fix and D-Lighting, as well as macro shooting from 15cm, three movie modes with sound, plus a new time-lapse movie mode.

Another new feature allows users to select their favourite three of the 16 available scene modes to appear in the Mode menu for easier access.

Turn it on and it's ready to go in milliseconds rather than minutes and the menu system, or rather lack of one, means you shouldn't have too much trouble using the camera.

Shortcut keys for features like flash, timer,

...cont.

exposure, macro mode and scene settings can be found on the back while the rest, like changing picture resolution or cropping images in-camera, can be found on the menu system.

The only complaint we found with the menu system was that the menu allowing you to set the date, or format the memory card, for example, was buried in the scene selection menu, somewhere we weren't expecting it.

Nifty features like the D-Lighting option that will bring light to your images are welcomed as was the face detection option that will detect up to five faces in any one shot and then allow you to zoom in on the images.

Get past the menu systems and the feature set and the Coolpix S520 is a breeze to use, taking great looking pictures with little noise thanks to a good ISO range (64 to 2000) and a low f stop of 2.8. The images might be smaller than their 10 megapixel counterparts, however they contained little noise and plenty of detail.

VERDICT

The Nikon S520 might be a simple point and shoot, but it's one that impressed us.

Image quality is very good and the price (around £150) is even better.

The only grumps are that the design isn't likely to impress and even though it's made out of metal it comes across as a bit flimsy, and that the macro mode wasn't great.

But if you are looking to snap your holiday or a party, you can't go far wrong with this.

At a glance

What is it?

8 megapixel point and shoot

Good

Simple to use, good image quality

Bad

Design bog standard, not many features beyond core set

Verdict

The Nikon S520 might be a simple point and shoot, but it's one that impressed us

Price £150

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10