

MANUAL FILM CAMERAS & LENSES

The illustrated buying cheat sheet



FIND YOUR STARTING POINT

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Buy condition first. Start with one clean prime. Leave room for film and service.

NIKON

FM2n



BODY BUDGET

\$300-650

TOP SPEED / FLASH SYNC

1/4000 / 1/250

LENS SYSTEM

Nikon F / AI-compatible

Nikon FM2 family shown. Confirm U.S.-market FM2n version before buying.

PROS

Direct controls; useful fast shutter and flash sync; extensive compatible prime-lens choices.

CONS

Higher body cost; no automatic exposure; shutter and meter still need testing.

THREE LENSES TO KNOW

50mm f/1.8 AI / AI-S

\$80-180

+ Small, bright everyday lens. / Versions differ in close focus and build.

28mm f/2.8 AI-S

\$180-350

+ Wide view and useful close focusing. / Costs more; verify the AI-S version.

105mm f/2.5 AI / AI-S

\$150-300

+ Excellent portrait focal length. / Requires steadier technique and careful focus.

CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Use compatible AI / AI-S lenses. Unmodified non-AI lenses can damage the indexing mechanism.

Also consider: FM (\$150-300) for a lower-cost mechanical body; F2 (\$250-600) for a larger professional system.

CANON

FTb / FTb-N



Canon FTb shown. Mounted lens is illustrative; recommended lenses are listed below.

BODY BUDGET

\$80-200

TOP SPEED / FLASH SYNC

1/1000 / 1/60

LENS SYSTEM

Canon FD

PROS

Solid build; selective central metering; Quick Load system; many appealing FD primes.

CONS

Heavy body; obsolete meter battery specification; aging seals and shutter timing.

THREE LENSES TO KNOW

FD 50mm f/1.8

\$40-90

+ Affordable, compact first prime. / Less light than the f/1.4 version.

FD 28mm f/2.8

\$70-150

+ Useful for travel and environmental work. / Wide-open edges can be less crisp.

FD 135mm f/3.5

\$40-100

+ Inexpensive reach and tighter framing. / Needs space and adequate shutter speed.

CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Ask about a voltage-correct battery solution or meter conversion. FD and EOS / EF are different mounts.

Also consider: AE-1 (\$120-250) or AE-1 Program (\$150-300) if battery-dependent electronic operation suits you.

MINOLTA

SR-T 101 / 201



Minolta SR-T 101 shown. Features vary across the SR-T family.

BODY BUDGET

\$60-160

TOP SPEED / FLASH SYNC

1/1000 / 1/60

LENS SYSTEM

Minolta SR / MC / MD

PROS

Mechanical operation; direct exposure controls; appealing and often affordable Rokkor lenses.

CONS

Substantial weight; aging meter; obsolete mercury-cell specification on these models.

THREE LENSES TO KNOW

MC / MD 50mm f/1.7

\$35-90

+ Bright, compact and economical. / Multiple versions; inspect the actual copy.

MD 28mm f/2.8

\$50-120

+ Practical wide angle for everyday use. / Corner performance varies by version.

MC / MD 135mm f/2.8

\$50-130

+ Affordable reach with a bright aperture. / Larger kit; focus and shake matter more.

CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Check meter calibration and battery solution. MC / MD manual-focus lenses are not Maxxum AF lenses.

Also consider: X-700 (\$100-220), an electronic body with automatic modes. Ask about capacitor condition and service.

PENTAX

K1000 / MX



Pentax K1000 shown; the MX is a separate, smaller model.

BODY BUDGET

\$100-220 / \$150-300

TOP SPEED / FLASH SYNC

1/1000 / 1/60

LENS SYSTEM

Pentax K with aperture ring

PROS

K1000: clear, basic controls. MX: compact body, depth-of-field preview and self-timer. Shared lens system.

CONS

K1000 prices can reflect popularity. MX controls are small. Neither offers automatic exposure.

THREE LENSES TO KNOW

SMC Pentax-M 50mm f/1.7

\$40-90

+ Small, bright and versatile. / Inspect aperture blades and focus feel.

SMC Pentax-M 28mm f/2.8

\$60-130

+ Compact wide-angle option. / Not wide enough for every tight interior.

SMC Pentax-M 135mm f/3.5

\$40-90

+ Small and affordable telephoto. / Slower than f/2.8; needs steadier handling.

CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Prioritize a healthy shutter over cosmetics. Use K-mount lenses with aperture rings; M42 lenses require an adapter.

Also consider: a serviced Pentax KM or KX. Compare condition and included lenses before paying a K1000 premium.

OLYMPUS

OM-1 / OM-1n



Olympus OM-1 MD shown with a compact Zuiko normal lens.

BODY BUDGET

\$130-280

TOP SPEED / FLASH SYNC

1/1000 / 1/60

LENS SYSTEM

Original Olympus OM film

PROS

Compact body and primes; mechanical shutter; a pleasant kit to carry all day.

CONS

Unusual shutter-speed ring position; obsolete meter battery; inspect prism for deterioration.

THREE LENSES TO KNOW

OM Zuiko 50mm f/1.8

\$40-90

+ Compact, bright everyday lens. / Several versions; check coating condition.

OM Zuiko 28mm f/2.8

\$90-180

+ Small travel and landscape wide angle. / Pricier than some slower wide lenses.

OM Zuiko 100mm f/2.8

\$140-280

+ Compact portrait focal length. / Less common; clean copies can cost more.

CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Ask about meter conversion, internal foam and prism condition. Modern OM System lenses do not fit this film mount.

Also consider: OM-2 if electronic automatic exposure is useful. The original film OM-1 is not the modern digital OM-1.

LEICA M

M6 Classic



Leica M6 shown with a Summilux lens, not the lower-cost lens choices below.

BODY BUDGET

\$2,000-3,500

TOP SPEED / FLASH SYNC

1/1000 / 1/50

LENS SYSTEM

Leica M rangefinder

PROS

Quiet operation; separate optical finder; compact rangefinder lenses; mechanical shutter.

CONS

High purchase and service costs; alignment matters; limited close focusing and long-lens practicality.

THREE LENSES TO KNOW

Summicron-M 50mm f/2*

\$900-1,800

+ Compact Leica standard lens. / Expensive; versions vary considerably.

Color-Skopar 35mm f/2.5 P II

\$250-400

+ Small, affordable M-mount choice. / Slower aperture; verify P II bayonet version.

Zeiss Planar 50mm f/2 ZM

\$450-750

+ Strong standard-lens alternative. / Still costly; check mechanical condition.

CHECK BEFORE BUYING

Verify exact M6 version, meter and rangefinder alignment. Classic, TTL and the 2022 M6 are not identical.

*Summicron range: common pre-ASPH versions. Buy for the rangefinder experience. M2 / M3 / M4 variants generally have no built-in meter; MP is another premium option.

Before you buy

A pretty camera is not necessarily a healthy camera.

01 BODY & TRANSPORT

No musty smell, corrosion or battery leakage. Check latch, winding, rewind, sprockets, film rails and pressure plate.

02 SHUTTER & SEALS

No damaged curtains or blades. Check several speeds; sound alone cannot prove accuracy. Inspect sticky or crumbling foam.

03 METER & FOCUS

Compare metering in several light levels. Check finder clarity and focus accuracy. Rangefinders need alignment testing.

04 LENS GLASS

Minor dust is normal. Watch for fungus, haze, separation, severe scratches and coating damage.

05 APERTURE & HELICOID

Focus should move smoothly. Automatic SLR diaphragms should operate promptly. Check for sticky or damaged blades.

06 TEST ROLL & RETURN

Verify exposure, spacing, light leaks, scratches and near/distant focus while you can still return the equipment.

MANUAL DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN MECHANICAL

Mechanical, meter battery only: FM2n, FTb, SR-T, K1000 / MX, OM-1, M6 Classic.

Electronic normal operation: AE-1 / Program, X-700, FE2 / F3, F100, EOS Elan II. Manual exposure can still be available. Some have limited mechanical backups.

A SIMPLE FIRST KIT

Tested body + clean 50mm prime + correct battery / meter + strap + a test roll. Buy a second lens after you know which photographs your first lens cannot make.

Read this with the prices

U.S. dollars / prepared September 25, 2026

Ranges are broad planning estimates for normal working used equipment, not quotes or verified market averages. Bodies and lenses are priced separately. Shipping, tax, repairs, rare variants and collector premiums are excluded. Serviced dealer examples can cost more.

Market check: MPB listed six Nikon FM2n bodies at \$444-634. Other listings were sometimes unpriced or unavailable; estimates should be checked against current stock. Buy the exact version and condition you intend to use.

READ THE ORIGINAL MANUAL

Nikon FM2 manual and model history

Canon FTb / FTb-N / AE-1 Program museum

Original Minolta, Pentax and Olympus manuals

Leica M6 documents (check exact version)

MPB FM2n inventory / dated price example

PHOTOGRAPHS

Nikon FM2 - JorgeGT / Public domain

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Pentax K1000 - Martin Taylor / CC BY-SA 2.5

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The full companion article includes exposure guidance, additional body options, buying links and more detailed inspection advice.