



- ▶ Review
- ▶ Sample Pictures
- ▶ ISO 12233 Crops
- ▶ Vignetting

**BUY!**

### Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens Review

The Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens is an **excellent macro lens** - and may be Canon's **most fun per dollar** lens.

Most macro lenses are sharp by their nature, and the Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens does not disappoint in this area. This lens is sharp wide open and even sharper stopped down slightly with corners showing the most improvement. The tiniest details in your tiniest subjects will come to life.

In addition, the Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens is relatively small, is very light and focuses reasonably fast. This is the lens I recommend for someone starting out in macro photography.

The Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens' build quality is decent. It focuses fast without extending/rotating. It focuses quietly via USM (Ultrasonic Motor).

Vignetting is apparent at f/2.8, but rapidly disappears when stopped down.

There are other (non-macro lens) solutions for macro photography such as extension tubes and close-up filters/lenses (like the Canon 500D Close-Up Lens), but these solutions require adding/removing lenses or filters to take a lens from macro mode to normal mode and vice versa. I found the true macro lens (1:1) such as the Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens to be more convenient to use. That said, these alternate solutions are often more affordable. You ultimately must make your personal decision.

© The-Digital-Picture.com



Pictured above from left to right are the Canon EF-S 60mm f/2.8 Macro USM lens, Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM lens and Canon EF 180mm f/3.5 L USM lens.

So, which macro lens should you choose? Good question.

Choosing the right focal length is probably the first criteria. Longer focal length macro lenses generally give you more distance-to-subject working space for the same subject framing. At the Canon EF-S 60mm f/2.8 Macro lens' 3.5" or so (9cm) 1:1 working distance, it is hard to keep insects from leaving the territory. The Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens allows about 6" (15cm) and the Canon EF 180mm f/3.5 L USM lens allows about 9.5" (24cm) of working distance at 1:1 magnification.

The focal length also affects other macro photography aspects. Longer focal lengths require more distance to acquire the same subject framing. The result is a change of perspective - the telephotos compress/flatten the subject features more than short focal lengths. The wider angle of view of the short focal length macro lenses mean that more of the background will be in the picture - and that the background will be less-diffusely blurred. Picture what I am talking about ...

### Background Blur Comparison

© The-Digital-Picture.com



The pictures above were taken with three macro lenses (180mm L, 100mm and 60mm). They are identically framed using the same aperture setting (f/16) and have identical subject to background distances. DOF (Depth of Field) is not different (same framing, same aperture = same DOF until closer to the hyper-focal distance), but perspective/compression and angle of view are very different. The 180mm lens shows only a small physical area of background subject that is compressed/enlarged to magnify the blur. Background subjects in the 60mm picture appear to be more in focus. They are not - they are just about as blurred, but they appear much smaller in the picture - and there are more of them because of the 60mm's angle of view. This gives a less diffuse looking background blur. If you are using a backdrop (such as rolled paper), the background blur aspect might not be important to you.

There are downsides to the longer focal length macro lenses. They are larger/heavier and require a faster shutter speed for handholding.

If you are looking for the ultimate nature macro shots, there is probably not a better choice than the Canon EF 180mm f/3.5 L USM lens. But, this is a relatively heavy and expensive lens that focuses slowly.

If you are looking for a great macro lens, the Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro lens is a very good choice. It offers excellent optical performance and middle of the road focal length, working distance and size/weight. Price makes this lens a decent value. The 100mm focal length makes a decent tight portrait lens as well.

Here is a warning for anyone contemplating the purchase of the Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens: You will find yourself looking for little things to use for subjects. No bug is safe. You will find you neck hurting from looking down all the time. You will discover a world you never knew existed. Macro photography is great fun.

An accessory tripod ring is not included and recommended if you are using the Wimberley macro flash bracket.

As the Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM Macro Lens is a "Macro" lens, I use it mostly for **flower and insect** closeup/macro pictures. However, the 100mm focal length and bokeh

(foreground/background blur quality) make this a good **portrait lens** also.