

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1965 Chevrolet Caprice Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1965 Chevrolet Caprice Restoration Guide

Model Years 1965

Model	Chevrolet Caprice Custom Sedan — RPO Z18 on the Impala
Body / frame	119-in wheelbase, full perimeter frame, coil springs all round
Engines	283 (195 hp) standard; 327 and 396 (325 hp) optional
Transmissions	3-speed manual standard; Powerglide; 4-speed optional
Price	\$2,742 Impala hardtop + \$200 Z18 package
Identity	One body style, one package: the Caprice is an option, not yet a series

Every specification in this guide was checked against factory literature, marque references, period road tests, and documented survivor vehicles. Where sources disagree or the record is silent, this guide says so rather than guessing.

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1. What this guide is — and is not

This is a single-year guide. It covers model year 1965 only. Where a neighbouring year differs, the difference is stated as a difference — the other year's parts, ratings and trim are never silently borrowed. Shared platform engineering is shared honestly; the specification table, the year-change register and the finishes in this guide are this year's own.

2. The year in brief

There is no 1965 Caprice series, and a correct restoration starts by admitting it. What Chevrolet sold in 1965 was the Caprice Custom Sedan, option package RPO Z18, offered only on the Impala four-door hardtop and adding \$200 to its \$2,742 price. The package answered Ford's LTD with luxury rather than size: a heavier frame, suspension revisions, black-accented grille and rear panel, fleur-de-lis roof-quarter emblems, colour-keyed stripes, full wheel covers shared with the Super Sport but carrying a bowtie instead of the SS emblem, and an interior in higher-grade cloth and vinyl with faux-walnut trim, pull straps and extra courtesy lighting.

The standard engine was the 283 at 195 hp, with a column-shifted three-speed manual; the option sheet ran through the 327s to the new 396 Turbo-Jet at 325 hp. Every other body style wearing a Caprice badge in 1965 dress is a later creation. The 1966 guide in this program covers the very different car that followed, when Caprice became a series of its own.

3. Year-change register

Read this register before ordering anything. It is the difference between a 1965 car and a car that merely looks like one from across the street.

Item	1964 Impala	This year (1965)
Status of the name	Impala is the series	Caprice = RPO Z18 package on the Impala 4-door hardtop only
Body styles	Full Impala range	One: four-door hardtop (Sport Sedan)
Frame	Impala standard	Heavier frame specified with the Z18 package
Standard engine	283, 195 hp (Impala)	283, 195 hp
Top engine	409 (outgoing)	396 Turbo-Jet, 325 hp — the new big-block
Emblems	Impala script	Fleur-de-lis roof-quarter emblems; Caprice hood and dash emblems



4. Specification table — 1965

Item	Specification
Wheelbase	119 in
Length	About 213 in
Standard engine	283 cu in V8, 195 hp (gross)
Optional engines	327 V8s; 396 Turbo-Jet, 325 hp
Transmissions	3-speed manual; Powerglide automatic; 4-speed manual
Package price	RPO Z18: +\$200 on \$2,742

5. Numbers, tags and identity

- The VIN is an Impala VIN — that is correct for 1965. Caprice identity lives in the Z18 content (trim, emblems, interior specification) and in documentation, not in a Caprice series code that does not exist this year.
- Authenticate the package content item by item: fleur-de-lis emblems, black-accented panels, walnut trim, pull straps. A badge-only car is an Impala with jewellery.
- Engine suffix codes decide big-block claims: a 396 car must carry the right suffix and casting dates for a 1965 build.

6. Engines and transmissions

- **283 V8 (standard).** 195 hp, two-barrel — the Z18 base and the volume engine.
- **327 V8s.** The middle of the option sheet; verify rating by suffix code, not by air-cleaner decal.
- **396 Turbo-Jet.** 325 hp — the new Mark IV big-block in its first year, and the engine that makes a 1965 Caprice a performance car as well as a luxury package.
- Axles follow the engine: small-block cars typically carry the 10-bolt, big-block cars the 12-bolt, with Positraction optional.

7. Paint, trim and finishes

The Z18 interior is the package: higher-grade cloth-and-vinyl seats and door trim, thicker carpeting, faux-walnut dashboard and door trim, pull straps and added courtesy lights. Restore to that specification from documented 1965 cars — 1966 Caprice trim is a different, richer pattern and does not belong in a 1965 car.

8. Rust and inspection map

One body style focuses the inspection: the four-door hardtop's frameless glass and roof channel are the 1965-specific traps on top of the standard full-size map.

- Frame rails at the body mounts and rear kick-up — the perimeter frame rots from inside; probe, do not just look.
- Trunk floor and drop-offs, rear quarter panels low behind the wheels, and the valance behind the rear bumper.
- Floor pans at the front seat mounts and under the rear seat; lift the carpets on any car being valued.
- Lower front fenders and the cowl sides behind them; formal-roof cars add the C-pillar and rear-window channel.