

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1976 Jeep CJ-7 Restoration Guide

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

1976 Jeep CJ-7

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

RestorationEssentials single-year guide · Model year 1976 only · CJ-7 (AMC era),
93.4-inch wheelbase

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1976 only. This guide does not cover other years except where differences from 1976 are explicitly noted.
- **Engine:** 232 cu in I6 — 100 hp (net) at 3,600 rpm; 185 lb-ft at 1,800 rpm (JP Magazine)
- **Engine:** 258 cu in I6 — 110 hp (California one-barrel specification, JP Magazine); ratings vary by carburetion across the run (~98–115 hp net era)
- **Engine:** 304 cu in V8 — 150 hp at 4,200 rpm; 245 lb-ft at 2,500 rpm (JP Magazine)
- **Transmission:** T-150 3-speed manual (standard); T-18 4-speed with granny low (optional, six-cylinder cars — JP Magazine); GM TH400 3-speed automatic behind the Quadra-Trac / V8 combination.
- **Transfer case:** Dana 20 (part-time, manuals); Borg-Warner 1339 Quadra-Trac (full-time, with TH400).
- **Axles:** Dana 30 front (narrow-track); AMC 20 rear, two-piece shafts. Quadra-Trac cars carry an offset-pumpkin AMC 20 — driveline swaps respect the offset or replace the axle deliberately and on paper.

1. Manufacturer history: Jeep

AMC's CJ-7 arrived for 1976 as the CJ for people who used doors: a 93.4-inch wheelbase against the CJ-5's 83.5, squared door openings, an available molded hardtop and steel doors, and — a first for the CJ line — an optional automatic transmission, made possible by the extra length. The frame's rear section stepped outward so springs and dampers sat closer to the wheels — the stability fix the CJ-5 never got. AMC built 379,299 CJ-7s over eleven model years. The CJ-7 is simultaneously the most restorable CJ (parts, knowledge, and numbers) and the most modified vehicle in this guide series — which makes documentation, not scarcity, the restorer's core skill.

2. Model history: where 1976 sits

The CJ-7 ran 1976–86 in three drivetrain eras: 1976–79 (Dana 20, heavy-duty manuals, Quadra-Trac), 1980–81 (Dana 300 arrives, SR-4 era, the 304's last years), and 1982–86 (wide-track axles, five-speed, four-cylinder base). Trim ran Renegade throughout, Golden Eagle in the V8 era, Laredo from 1980, Limited for 1982–83, and the numbered 1982 Jamboree. This guide covers one year only; the year-change register in Section 3 states exactly what this year changed, what it kept, and what it ended.

3. What is unique about the 1976 Jeep CJ-7

- Launch year. Everything is new: 93.4-inch wheelbase, squared door openings, factory molded hardtop and steel doors, and the first automatic ever offered in a CJ.
- Quadra-Trac full-time four-wheel drive debuts as the automatic's partner system — and dictates the offset rear axle that defines these cars underneath.
- The frame is only partly boxed on 1976 (and part-1977) cars: the welded C-channels stop about 3 feet short of the rear crossmember (JP Magazine) — inspect that transition on every 1976.
- Front disc brakes are an OPTION this year only in the early run — a 1976 can be factory-correct on drums or on discs; the build record, not habit, decides.

Year-change register — 1976 vs. the year before:

- NEW (model launch): CJ-7 model itself; 93.4-inch wheelbase; squared door openings; factory hardtop/steel doors; TH400 automatic option; Quadra-Trac; Dana 20; AMC 20 rear axle.
- FIRST YEAR ONLY: front discs optional (standard from 1977); frame not fully boxed at the rear.
- CARRIED IN: 232 / 258 / 304 AMC engine family from the CJ-5 line.

4. Technical restoration data — 1976 Jeep CJ-7

4.1 Specification table (1976)

Item	1976 specification
Transmission	T-150 3-speed manual (standard); T-18 4-speed with granny low (optional, six-cylinder cars — JP Magazine); GM TH400 3-speed automatic behind the Quadra-Trac / V8 combination.
Transfer case	Dana 20 (part-time, manuals); Borg-Warner 1339 Quadra-Trac (full-time, with TH400).
Axles	Dana 30 front (narrow-track); AMC 20 rear, two-piece shafts. Quadra-Trac cars carry an offset-pumpkin AMC 20 — driveline swaps respect the offset or replace the axle deliberately and on paper.
Brakes	Front discs OPTIONAL in 1976 (JeepTech Dana 30 reference); drums standard. 1976–78 disc cars use the 'big brake' 10.5 x 1.125-inch rotor with a 6-bolt caliper bracket.
Trim / packages	Renegade; Golden Eagle (V8-era flagship — see the corrections file on its start year); Levi's denim interior package appears in the early-year period catalogs.
Production	379,299 CJ-7s were built across 1976–86 (range guide / marque reporting). A verified 1976-only production split was not stated in the sources consulted — none is printed.

Engines (1976):

Engine	Rating	Notes
232 cu in I6	100 hp (net) at 3,600 rpm; 185 lb-ft at 1,800 rpm (JP Magazine)	Standard engine at launch — except California, where the 258 one-barrel was the standard six (JP Magazine). Dropped in the late 1970s as the 258 took the base role (JeepTech).
258 cu in I6	110 hp (California one-barrel specification, JP Magazine); ratings vary by carburetion across the run (~98–115 hp net era)	Optional in most markets for 1976; the CJ-7's defining engine, fitted across the whole run.
304 cu in V8	150 hp at 4,200 rpm; 245 lb-ft at 2,500 rpm (JP Magazine)	Top option. 8.4:1 compression. Opens the V8 era that runs to 1981.

4.2 VIN and serial decoding

1976–80 CJ-7s carry the 13-character Jeep serial: J (Jeep), a year digit (6 = 1976 ... 0 = 1980), a transmission letter (A automatic, F 4-speed manual in the documented cars), model digits 93 (CJ-7, 93-inch class), a GVW letter, an engine letter, and the six-digit serial. Documented examples in the range guide: J6A93EH078115 (a 1976 304 car) and J6F93AA071236 (a 1976 258). Engine letters of the era: A/C for the 258 (1-1/2-barrel), E for the 232, H for the 304 V8. Photograph the plate before anything else — on a Jeep this modified, the serial is the restoration's foundation document.

4.3 Year-correct procedures and finishes (1976)

- Brake ordering splits inside 1976: confirm disc or drum specification from the Jeep's own equipment before ordering — both are correct for the year, on different cars.