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1959 Ford Galaxie Restoration Guide

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1959 Ford Galaxie

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

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About This Guide

This is the RestorationEssentials factory-correct restoration guide for the 1959 Ford Galaxie Restoration Guide — one model, one year, nothing else. Every specification in this guide was checked against marque references, factory literature excerpts, and enthusiast documentation before it was written. Our operating ethic is simple: we don't lie and we don't steal, we offer value. That means three things for this guide. First, no invented specifications — every number has a source. Second, where reputable sources disagree, the disagreement is disclosed in the text and in the Sources, Conflicts & Omissions section rather than papered over. Third, where a detail could not be verified, it is omitted and the omission is recorded — an honest gap beats a confident fabrication.

How to use this guide: start with the VIN and door data plate decoding sections to establish exactly what your car was when it left the factory. Use the engine, transmission, axle, paint, and casting sections to verify that what is on the car today matches what should be there. Use the rust and restoration-sequence sections to plan the work. And keep this guide in the shop — it is a working document, not a coffee-table book.

A final note: these cars are sixty years old. Parts have been swapped, plates have been lost, and memories have faded.

Trust the metal — casting numbers, date codes, and stampings — over stories. When in doubt, photograph everything and verify against the factory service manual for your year.

1. Manufacturer History: Ford

Ford Motor Company was incorporated in 1903 by Henry Ford and a group of Detroit investors. The 1908 Model T put the world on wheels — more than 15 million built — and the moving assembly line at Highland Park (1913) redefined manufacturing itself. The 1927 Model A and the 1932 flathead V8, the first affordable V8 in an inexpensive car, cemented Ford's place in the American garage and created a performance culture around the brand that never left.

After World War II, Ford modernized under Henry Ford II and the 'Whiz Kids.' The 1949 Ford saved the company; the 1955 Thunderbird created the personal-luxury segment; and the 1959 Galaxie — named for the Space Race — gave Ford's top full-size trim a name of its own. By the early 1960s Ford was all-in on 'Total Performance': the 1963½ Galaxie fastback shaped in a wind tunnel for NASCAR, the 427-powered factory lightweight Galaxies, and the 1964½ Mustang that changed the industry overnight.

The full-size Ford was the company's foundation through all of it — the car Ford dealers lived on. For 1965 Ford gave its big cars a full-perimeter frame, coil-spring suspension at all four corners, and the quiet, solid road manners that made the 1965-1968 generation the best-selling big Fords ever built. The 1966 Galaxie 500 7-Litre and the 1967 facelift carried the performance torch; the 1968 restyle, the 1969 redesign, and the 1971 redesign kept the full-size line current through the end of the muscle era.

For the restorer, Ford's scale is both blessing and curse. Mechanical parts were made by the million, so FE and 385-series engine components, Toploader and C6 transmissions, and 9-inch rear-axle parts are 1959 Ford Galaxie

easy to find — but year-specific trim and sheet metal were made for one model year, and the difference between a 1967 and a 1968 fender is the difference between a correct car and an expensive mistake. The door data plate decodes the car's born-with configuration, and for 1967-and-later cars the Marti Report (built from Ford's production database) confirms it.



History: Ford Galaxie

Ford named its top full-size trim for the Space Race: the Galaxie debuted for 1959 as the flagship trim of the Fairlane 500, and the name stuck. For 1960 the Galaxie became a standalone series, and the semi-fastback Starliner hardtop — shaped with NASCAR in mind — gave Ford a superspeedway body two years before the famous 1963½ fastback.

The early 1960s were Ford's 'Total Performance' years, and the full-size car carried the banner. The 390 arrived for 1961 in 300, 330, and 375-horsepower forms; the 406 replaced the hi-po 390 for 1962 with 385 or 405 horsepower; and for 1963 the 427 — 410 horsepower with one four-barrel, 425 with two — turned the Galaxie into a NASCAR homologation special. The mid-year Sports Hardtop fastback, developed in the wind tunnel, was the roofline that made the 427 aerodynamically viable on the superspeedways.

3. What Makes the 1959 Unique

The 1959 Galaxie is the first of the name — and the only Galaxie that is not a standalone series. For 1959 the Galaxie was the top trim level of the Fairlane 500 line, the equivalent of Chevrolet's Impala, which had debuted the same way the year before. Every 1959 Galaxie is a Fairlane 500 underneath, with Galaxie trim, and the VIN's body code plus the warranty plate tell the story. A car missing its Galaxie trim is still a Fairlane 500 underneath, which matters when you are buying trim pieces that were Galaxie-only for a single year.

The 1959 Fords wore the final facelift of the 1957-1959 generation on the 118-inch-wheelbase platform: a full-width concave grille with prominent FORD block letters, quad headlamps carried over from 1958, sculpted side trim sweeping from the front fender through the door, and tailfins capped with round taillamps in bright bezels. The Galaxie added its script badges on the front fenders and rear deck, upgraded side moldings, and plusher interior fabrics that set it apart from the Fairlane 500.

The headline body style was the Skyliner — the retractable-hardtop convertible whose power-operated steel roof folded into the trunk. The Skyliner was the most mechanically ambitious car Ford sold in 1959, and 1959 was its final year: seven reversible electric motors, ten solenoids, four locking mechanisms, and hundreds of feet of wiring just to put the top down. The 1959 Galaxie Skyliner is the only Galaxie Skyliner ever built. Buy one only with the top mechanism fully working, or budget for a specialist restoration of the system.

Mechanically, the 1959 Galaxie carried the 1958 powertrain family into its second year: the 223 Mileage Maker six as the economy standard, the 292 Y-block as the volume V8, and the FE-series 332 (B-code 2-barrel, G-code 4-barrel) and 352 (300-horsepower 4-barrel Thunderbird V-8) at the top. The FE was 1959 Ford Galaxie

only in its second year, which makes 1959 FE casting numbers and date codes a study of their own — early-production quirks are the norm, not the exception.

Restoration reality: nearly every 1959-specific trim and sheetmetal piece is one-year-only — grille, front fenders, side trim, taillamp bezels, Galaxie scripts — and reproduction support for 1959 brightwork is thin compared with the 1960-1964 cars. Plan on restoring original trim (straightening, re-chroming, re-anodizing) rather than buying new. The best 1959 projects start with the most complete, most original car you can find, because every missing Galaxie-only piece becomes a search.

Year-to-year changes at a glance.

■ Galaxie debuts as the top trim of the Fairlane 500 — not yet a standalone series. The first year of the name, the Space-Race flagship trim.

■ 332 and 352 FE V8s join the carryover 223 six and 292 Y-block. Cruise-O-Matic automatic optional across the range.