

2013 CHEVROLET Impala LS 220 FI MPG= 28.6 Hwy

Written by Double Dragon

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2013 Chevrolet Impala MPG when new= EPA 18 MPG City/ 30 MPG Hwy

The Chevrolet Impala debut in 1958 as a top trim level on the full size Bel Air proved popular enough to warrant a separate model line starting in 1959. During the 1960s the Impala ranged from 6 cylinder economy versions all the way up to the famous 409 SS cars. The 1959 to 1964 Chevrolet Impala was built on a 119 inch wheelbase and remained within fractions of 210 inches long during these years. V8 equipped Impalas weighed about 3,600 to 3,800 pounds curb. MOTOR TREND got 10.7 MPG out of an Impala from this period.

Impala became the best selling family car of the 1960s by provided good looking comfortable large family transportation at a decent price.

Impala received a terrific looking redesign for 1965 which pushed sales of the Impala over 1 million cars. That record was accomplished despite diffusion of the sales numbers due to the Caprice being counted separately. General Motors' popular 'coke bottle' Corvette styling worked

so well on the 1966 intermediates that GM applied the style to the full size cars in 1967 and 1968. The Impala still provided utility but did so with exciting lines. When the great looking Chrysler 'fuselage' cars appeared the 1969 Impala kept pace with a loop bumper and slab sides emphasizing a long low wide look.

The 1970 Impala was in its 6th model year. Almost all quirks had been eliminated from the platform and many believe this is one of the best built Chevies of all time. The Impala wasn't entirely perfect: it was subject to failed engine mounts and needed a retaining wire added in a recall. Any Impala that has received this fix is virtually bulletproof. See a 1970 Impala daily driver with over 300,000 miles in the 20 YEARS PLUS section of the CAR STORIES on this website.

The 1971 Impala received a Cadillac style nose and needless added bulk and a longer wheelbase at 121.5 inches. The stretched out Impala came under fire from car magazines for difficult parking and pointless added weight without providing any increase in trunk or interior room. Even saddled with extra weight the 4,000 pound 1971 achieved 14 MPG in base 6 cylinder 4 door form according to LEMON AID. Somehow this figure inflated to an astounding 21 MPG in the LA ratings for the 1972 base 6 cylinder. By 1976 the overall length was 222.7 inches (partly due to the 5 MPH bumpers) and weight a shocking 4,361 pounds. LA says that somehow the 350 managed to crank out 17 MPG even saddled with a catalytic converter.

In 1977 Impala won Motor Trend 'Car of the Year' for its smaller and lighter redesign on a 116 inch wheelbase which simultaneously increased headroom and trunk room. Weight dropped to 3,771 pounds but LEMON AID shows a lower MPG figure of 15 with a 350 which seems counter intuitive when compared to the 1976 carrying an extra 590 pounds. Reduced hip room wasn't mentioned in the accolades but the new narrow tall Impala began a trend that carries on today of packaging space 'upwards' in narrow cars. Impala held number one sales positions for years by adapting just enough to the new MPG conscious times while remaining big enough for families.

In the 1980s the Impala name sunk from denoting a premium car line to signifying the base level full size Chevrolet. Families abandoned cars and flocked to SUVs and trucks. Impala's demotion from its debut as top trim level on the large Chevrolet to bottom rung police, rental agencies and city vehicles is partly due to the popularity of top level Caprice. The main reason for the focus flip from family to 'fleet car' was the SUV insanity that gripped the nation for decades. Eventually the proud Impala name

was discontinued leaving the Caprice name attached to full size Chevies which for all intents and purposes were nothing but police cars.

Concurrent with the SUV plague attacking the nation came the ascent of the foreign invasion. Toyota Camry and Honda Accord were proven mechanically due to the foreign factories making continuous quality control improvements. Once the formerly ugly Camry was redesigned into a bland but inoffensive shape and expanded into a large enough platform for the USA market its sales exploded. The Camry became "The Chev Impala of the 1990s". The families that used to buy the Impala for utility, low cost and reliability ended up in Camrys which addressed these issues best in the 1990s. The remainder of the Impala's former market ended up in hideous SUV monstrosities that never ever saw one inch of a dirt road let alone off road activity.

While the Camry lapped up sales as "The Chev Impala of the 1990s" the real Impala was retired. The Camry people looking for utility and economy found the Caprice too large and saddled with uneconomical gas mileage. Families undeterred by the size and gas mileage of the Caprice didn't like its image as a police car/ taxi/ rental car. Caprice was out of vogue with the status seeking SUV crowd. A side effect of the SUV epidemic was GM's murder of the Caprice and all the rear drive full size GM cars due to the insatiable demand for SUV production line room.

Impala did come back briefly as a niche market car. The 1994 to 1996 Impala SS was a true performance vehicle, far more capable than the original 409 of the glory years. But for the Impala to be a mere niche market car doesn't sit right for a name that sold over 1 million cars in 1965. The end of the line for rear drive full size cars spelled the end of the brief revival of the Impala name and once again Impala died.

In 2000 Chevrolet fought fire with fire and went after the Camry on front wheel drive territory. Chevrolet attached the Impala name to a revised Lumina front wheel drive platform. The biggest available engine was now a V6 3.8 L. The tables had turned on the Impala which was once undisputed king of family cars. Back in 1992 the Camry was adapted to conform to the Impala's American size format. Instead of leading, now Chevy seemed to be following when it incorporated some of the Camry concept. Of course it could be argued that FWD is just a natural outcome for any automaker in this day and age.

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Front Wheel Drive creates efficiency advantages by running power through the front wheels. The weight of the driveshaft and rear axle housing is eliminated and that saved weight allows a smaller engine to move the same size car. The smaller engine means less engine weight, hence lower curb weight and better MPG results. FWD eliminates transmission and driveshaft intrusion into interior allowing a smaller car to provide large car interior room. FWD performs better in wet or icy winter conditions with extra weight on the drive wheels.

Rear Wheel Drive fans point out numerous FWD problems. FWD torque steer is annoying and even dangerous. The FWD experiences accelerated wear in the steering, suspension and front tires because FWD packs absolutely everything into the front end parts. Anyone who has replaced a front axle and constant velocity joints knows how much it can cost to drive a FWD. A RWD vehicle with the same mileage won't need anything done to the driveline. The RWD places less demand on front end parts. RWD vehicles have abundant space out back in which to package the hardware that transfers power to the wheels allowing use of larger, sturdier axle, driveshaft and U joint components which don't wear out so quickly.

Although Impala was playing the import game with a FWD car, it was now subject to some of the hassles of FWD that never affected the sturdy old RWD Impalas of the past. In 2004 and 2005 the Impala SS returned with a supercharged version of the 3.8 L engine. The Impala was switched to the W platform in 2005 and started out with many levels of trim including an SS that actually combined a V8 and FWD. As the first decade of the 2000s passed, the Impala seemed to lose its market. The SS model was discontinued and Impala once more repeated the 1980s slide into fleet car status.

In 2012 Chevy tried to pump some new life into the Impala with a slight redesign and some mechanical revisions. The engine options were dropped leaving just one engine: a new 3.6 L 302 HP V6. The 4 speed automatic transmission was replaced with a new 6 speed automatic. This version of the Impala will be continuously pumped out as the 2014 'Impala Limited' to supply police and rental car agencies. Meanwhile, the retail sector was treated to a newly redone Impala for 2014.

Similar to the 1970 Impala of old, the 2013 Impala is the product of a long term platform. At this point the bugs should have been worked out as they were in the 1970 version. But they aren't. The big hassle afflicting this car is the perception that it could be dangerous. GM has a recall for faulty ignition switches in which the typical person's overloaded key chain weight can pull the switch from 'on' to 'off'. Prior to the 1980s when a car suddenly stopped running nothing happened. But a modern electronic car becomes a menace if the engine stops while the car is in motion. The airbags and electric steering will cease to function if the engine stops running

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which has led to fatal accidents.

The OCCC GAS LOGS Impala had a problem that was probably particular only to this individual 2013 Impala. It caused a slight hassle due to an airbag warning light being constantly illuminated while driving. If a sensor fails (ie a bumper sensor) the system shuts itself down until the fault in the loop is identified.

Insofar as providing spacious comfortable smooth economical driving the Impala has made big strides to match or beat the competition. The initial cost of the Impala is low at \$26,685.00 while providing most convenience features expected from a fairly high end car such as element antenna actuated

AM/FM stereo and CD player, c

ruise control, r

emote trunk release, p

ower steering, t

ilt steering wheel, a

udio and cruise controls on steering wheel, c

lock, t

achometer, 6-way power driver seat, t

rip computer,

|

ow fuel level warning, r

emote keyless power door locks, p

ower mirrors,

power windows,

air conditioning, t

runk light, f

ront and rear reading lights, l

eaether trim on shift knob and

steering wheel, and d

ual illuminating vanity mirror. The trunk is decent sized at 18.6 cu.ft. The Impala has stability control, and 4-wheel-disc ABS brakes. The Impala also uses daytime running lights which sap a little bit of energy and hence lower fuel MPG slightly.

The fuel mileage has significantly improved compared to the old rear wheel drive platform that was retired in 1996.

How did Chevy do it?

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First, the new Impala is lighter and more aerodynamic. The new Impala is 200.4 inches long on a 110.5 inch wheelbase which is shorter length and wheelbase than the classic era (1968-77) intermediate which rode on a wheelbase of 112 inches and was around 205 inches long. Width of the new Impala at 72.9 isn't particularly svelte but the nose narrows into a point to aid windflow. Height is tall at 58.7 inches but the car gently slopes up to this peak and drops away again in a gradual angle.

Curb weight of the new 2013 is a mere 3,555 pounds. This weight is back down around what an intermediate from the mid 1960s weighed with no more options than an AM radio. Those 1960s intermediates didn't have power door locks, standard A/C, CD systems, intermittent windshield wipers, power windows, side impact beams, roll over standards, computers, ABS, catalytic converters, 5 MPH bumpers or any of the other complicated and heavy items standard in the current Impala.

Second, the 2013 engine is far more sophisticated. The 3.6 Litre V6 used in the 2013 Impala has double overhead cams plus variable valve timing and direct injection. These features allow the engine to optimize its use of fuel by only using what is needed to meet the load demands placed on the engine moment to moment. The 6 speed transmission also helps keep the engine in the ideal rev ranges for optimal fuel economy. Incredibly, Chevrolet pulls 300 HP out of this engine which is a mere 219.7 cubic inches. Rounded off to 220 cubic inches this is amazing to think about because the famous Chrysler 'slant six' used during the 1970s was 225 cubic inches and yielded around 100-110 HP in the smog era.

All the Impalas run through a 2.44:1 axle ratio with 6th gear providing a 0.74 overdrive which creates an extremely low highway friendly final gear ratio of 1.80:1.

The Impala LS comes with 16" aluminum alloy wheels and P225/60R16 tires.

The optional LT package has a rear spoiler and larger 17" x 7" alloy wheels with P225/55R17 tires, dual zone A/C, external temperature display,

C

compass and the fold down rear seats to access trunk

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The LTZ jumps to an 18 inch wheel.

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Taken on an overall basis the OOCC 2013 Impala averaged 70 MPH. Speed limits varied from 55 to 70 MPH but the wild card is always those seemingly omnipresent construction zones that skew the whole thing. Another unexpected event that clamped down on the steady 70 cruising occurred between 38,019 and 38,338 miles when the Impala was trapped in a back up for 20 minutes due to an overturned truck. The 3,555 pound Impala carried 2 passengers and luggage for a total weight of about 4,050 pounds.

Odometer Gallons Full tank? MPG

36,827	0.0	Full	
37,117	10.5	Full	27.6 MPG
37,405	9.3	Full	30.9 MPG
37,657	10.3	Full	24.4 MPG
38,010	11.5	Full	30.6 MPG

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38,338 10.3 Full 31.8 MPG

38,554 8.4 Full 25.7 MPG