

1972 OLDSMOBILE Cutlass Supreme conv 350-4 bbl MPG= 10.5 Overall

Written by Double Dragon

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1972 OLDSMOBILE Cutlass Supreme convertible 350-4 barrel MPG= 10.5 Overall Average

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The Cutlass Supreme was conquering the family car market in the 1970s. Customers of the full size General Motors cars such as the Chevrolet Impala, Pontiac Catalina, Oldsmobile 88 or Buick Electra downsized to the cheaper, easier to park intermediate sized Cutlass Supreme. Notably, it was the Cutlass Supreme that received the lion's share of this downsizing trend partly due to the good reputation of the Oldsmobile 'Rocket engines' but in large part because the Supreme offered the same comfort level as a well appointed full size car.

MPG FOR 1972 CUTLASS SUPREME WHEN NEW= 13.0 Overall Average

Sorting through the reports back in the day reveals a labyrinth of contradictions. The most accurate figures come from articles where the new car's performance was measured directly in regular use.

MOTOR TREND Nov 1971 tested a Cutlass Supreme two door hardtop with the 4 barrel 350 c.i. 180 HP

engine, automatic transmission and 2.73:1 rear axle.

MT observed that the Cutlass Supreme standard powertrain took the car to a top speed of 100 MPH. They didn't have the car long enough to test the MPG.

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The book WORLD CARS 1972 compiles information provided by manufacturers; specs are calculated rather than observed directly. WC 1972 lists identical top speed and fuel mileage for the 350 cubic inch 180 HP engine standard in Cutlass Supremes despite two different available rear axle ratios listed in WC.

The Cutlass Supreme with 180 HP 350-4 barrel is credited with a top speed of 116 MPH and gas consumption of 13.0 MPG regardless of presence of 2.73:1 or 3.08:1 rear axle ratio. Its hard to know which rear axle was used by WC to calculate top speed. 116 MPH is much higher than the observed top speed MT achieved in their tests.

The salesman spec guide for 1972 states that the standard transmission and axle for the 350-4 barrel that was standard in the Cutlass Supreme was the M38 automatic paired to the 2.73:1 axle. The 3.08:1 and 3.23:1 were optional.

POWER TEAMS	ENGINE	AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION			FULLY SYNCHRONIZED MANUAL TRANSMISSION		
		TOP SPEED (MPH)	FUEL CONSUMPTION (MPG)	AXLE RATIO	TOP SPEED (MPH)	FUEL CONSUMPTION (MPG)	AXLE RATIO
AXLES FOR ADJUST TRANSMISSION*							
FWD OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS S	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)
OLDSMOBILE CUTLASS SUPREME	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)
VOLVO DIVISION	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)
BUICK IN MIDWEST	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)
CHRYSLER CORPORATION	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)
PONTIAC	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)
TURBOCHARGED	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	2.73 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.08 (1972)
	ROCKET 350 4	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)	116 (1972)	13.0 (1972)	3.23 (1972)

The figures quoted in WC for the General Motors 1972 'A body' intermediates vary wildly despite the cars using the same frames and similar body shapes and horsepower ratings.

WC states that the 1972 Buick Skylark with a 180 HP 350-4 barrel, 3 speed manual transmission, and 3.08:1 axle can hit 103 MPH. Pontiac didn't have a 4 barrel 350 available in 1972. WC credits the Pontiac LeMans with 350-2 barrel (175 HP), 3 speed manual trans, and 2.56:1 axle at 111 MPH.

The 1972 Chevelle with a 350-4 barrel (175 HP), 3 speed manual transmission, and 3.31:1 axle ratio was supposed to be able to run 112 MPH.

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It seems the famous Rocket 350 Oldsmobile engine is best of all the engines according to WC with 116 MPH, but it could simply be that the different division engineers estimated the loss in top speed due to compression drop using different formulas. The WC book quotes figures using the manual 3 speed transmission. The salesman's guide shows axle ratios provided with the manual shift 3 speed transmission and the M38 TH350 automatic as seen below.

CUTLASS
MODELS/EQUIPMENT

Town Sedan G69 . . . \$1065.00 Hardtop Coupe F87 . . . \$2972.00 Cruiser G36 . . . \$3497.05

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
800	Standard Equipment	\$1065.00
801	Hardtop Coupe	\$2972.00
802	Cruiser	\$3497.05
803	... (extensive list of options and prices)	...

... (extensive list of options and prices follows in a similar format)

WORLD CARS receives their performance figures from the manufacturer. The gas consumption WC comes up with is based on a moderately loaded Cutlass Supreme covering variable terrain at approximately 60% of top speed, which would be about 67 MPH.

OCC CUTLASS SUPREME DRIVING CONDITIONS:

The standard 1972 Cutlass Supreme 2 door convertible has a curb weight of 3,627 pounds according to WORLD CARS 1972. The Oldsmobile salesman's guide for 1972 states that the Cutlass Supreme convertible has a curb weight of 3,614 pounds (shipping weight of 3,510 pounds).

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The 3,627 pounds quoted is technically correct but unrepresentative of the majority of Cutlass Supreme 2 door convertible cars built because the base car is listed with the lightweight 3 speed manual transmission in WC. Obviously a high end car like this convertible doesn't stand pat with the standard manual transmission, but listing a stripped car is a time honored tactic used to reduce the quoted base price.

The figures below are from the AMA stat sheet providing the weight of various options on a 1972 Pontiac. General Motors sourced their power steering, power brakes, A/C etc from the same suppliers regardless of the division installing the parts. The Pontiac accessory figures apply to Oldsmobile, too. The weight for the radio comes from the 1967 Oldsmobile Cutlass AMA specs.

Below is a summary of the OOC Cutlass Supreme options and the weight increase above the base 350 4 bbl manual transmission 'stripped' 2 door convertible:

- + 112.0 lbs- air conditioning
- + 29.0 lbs- power disc brakes
- + 28.6 lbs- dual exhaust
- + 28.0 lbs- power steering
- + 27.8 lbs- M38 TH350 transmission
- + 8.0 lbs- radio
- = 233.4 lbs added in total

The curb weight of the OOC Cutlass Supreme totals 3,860 pounds plus a few more pounds for miscellaneous options such as the electric clock, bucket seats, console, dual custom sport mirrors with driver remote and so on. A realistic total would be about 3,880 pounds. Add 200 lbs for driver or miscellaneous items and the as driven weight was around 4,080 pounds.

The standard tires on the Cutlass Supreme convertible were F78x14 with G70x14 and G78x14 optional. If the optional 455 was installed or if A/C was added to the 350 engine then the standard tire size bumped up to G78x14.

